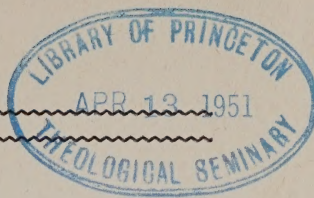


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In the Direction of Dreams



*In the Direction
of Dreams*

by
VIOLET WOOD



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VIOLET WOOD, born in Scotland, spent her childhood and youth in Massachusetts. Throughout her study at three universities — Boston, Columbia, and Cornell — her major was journalism. From 1937 to 1940 she was on the staff of the Missionary Education Movement; since 1940 much of her time has been spent in writing. In addition to stories that have appeared in nearly every denominational youth periodical in this country as well as many general publications, she is known widely in church circles as the author of *Great Is the Company*, the story of the adventures of men and women who have translated the Bible into many languages. She is at present an editorial writer on the staff of the University Press of the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois.

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FOR MY SISTER AGNES

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Foreword

IN every community, state, and nation in the world there are situations calling for change, situations that good people talk about endlessly, situations about which nobody does a thing. "What can we do?" they say, while the problems of nations and men are left unsolved, waiting for some magic answer that never comes.

Today many young people are concerned about situations that separate individuals or groups, that compare unfavorably with what the Christian ideal of brotherhood ought to be. These young people are not only concerned, they are not only dreaming about something that somebody else might do, they are acting in the direction of their dreams. They have discovered that the common hours of a week end, a week, a fortnight, a year, or even two or three years invested in volunteer service in communities cut at the creed line, at the color line, and by railroad tracks can work magic—the kind of magic that cooperative Christian action, if given a chance, can achieve anywhere.

Most of the major denominations of the Protestant faith — individually and working unitedly through the Home Missions Council of North America — the Amer-

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ican Friends Service Committee, the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen, the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A., the Christian Work Camp Fellowship of Canada, and other Christian agencies have developed programs of challenging hand and heart service projects. Every year churches and church-related organizations are giving thousands of young people of all faiths — Jewish and Roman Catholic as well as Protestant — an opportunity to invest their time and skills in cooperative volunteer Christian service in every state of the Union, in Canada, in Latin America, in Europe, and in the Orient.

This book gives the stories of some of these young people, telling what they are like and what they are doing. Each project and group of workers is representative of similar projects and many groups in widespread areas. Those who have been chosen from the many are real young people in the world as it is in New York, in Texas, in Mexico, in France, and other places. They were not selected because their work was better than that of others but because their particular experiences happened to cover the unusual as well as the typical.

At a few points names of individuals have been invented to prevent embarrassment. In several instances what these young people have said has been rephrased or condensed with their permission and help. In cases where firsthand experience at the site of the project was not possible for the writer, material has been supplied, interpreted, and then carefully checked by three

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or more volunteers who took part in the projects or had responsibility for them. The eleven chapters, however, remain essentially and truly the stories of what happens when young people move in on communities to give Christian living a chance. It's their story — the story of how with Christian purpose they worked in the direction of their dreams and turned common hours to magic for themselves and others. Let them tell it.

VIOLET WOOD

Champaign, Illinois
November, 1948

*If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams,
and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he
will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.*

— *Henry David Thoreau*

chapter one

Americans without Home Towns

AS THEY WATCHED THE HUMAN cargo rumbling through their streets in June, the crop-wise of the upstate New York villages said to one another, "Reckon the peas are ready." They did not see men nor women nor children on the passing trucks, just pea pickers.

And that's all they were to Alice Jordan. She had volunteered for a summer of service with the Home Missions Council because she wanted to escape from the sheltered college town where she had always lived to some faraway excitement and romance. When her assignment to the Highland Migrant Camp on the edge of her own home town came, it was a blow. These Italian and Polish pea and bean pickers were not the least bit exciting or romantic. In no way were they like the characters in stories she had read and the heroic victims of the dust bowl that she had had in mind when she had written the New York office.

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A bunch called ne'er-do-wells, they lived in roadside shacks that were an eyesore to the countryside, made a fistful of money — so the legend went — spent it and moved on to the town's relief. It didn't seem to Alice that there was much sense in a church program that set out to serve such people. She could think of plenty of other things, much more interesting, to do with her summer vacation from college. She would keep her appointment with the field supervisor, Judith Anderson, and tell her it had all been a big mistake.

The rain had been coming down steadily for two days. Alice's car bounced in the muddy ruts of the lane between the rows of shacks that looked to her less attractive than the animal houses in a city zoo. Except for a woman standing in the doorway of one of the shacks, no one was about. Alice rolled down the car window and leaned out. "Can you tell me where the recreation center is?" she called.

"I dunno," the woman said, and Alice could tell from her voice that she was crying.

Alice hesitated a minute. "Have you been here long?"

"Two days. Two days an' no work. No nothin'." The woman turned away and was lost in the dark interior.

Alice shut off the motor and got out of the car. She went up the sodden plank steps, not at all sure of exactly what she was going to do or say.

Two identical pairs of cherry-black eyes peered out at her. "Mama is crying," one of the little girls said.

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"You're twins!"

"I'm Rosie and she's Rita."

"Mama is crying," Rita persisted, her own voice wavering.

Alice pushed in the screen door and entered. A wash-line of binder twine filled with children's wet clothes stretched the entire length of the room. Basins and buckets sat on the floor catching the steady drip of water from the leaky ceiling. It was as uninviting a place as Alice had ever seen; somebody's postwar dream house in reverse. On the brass bed that occupied half of the floor space, the mother was huddled.

"Could I possibly do anything?"

The woman shook her head. The noisy tick of a cheap clock and the drip of water into the basins filled the room. The twins looked expectantly at Alice, their troubled eyes beseeching her to do something about Mama. Alice didn't know what to say but, being young, she blurted out what was on her mind. "It's not good enough for such nice kids and you. Why did you ever come here?"

The woman sat bolt upright. "Such fine promises the crew boss makes to us in Scranton. Free house in the country. Plenty work for Tony and the boys. For me, too, in the cannery. I believed. Tony believed. 'Cause we had to. In Scranton we were gonna be evicted from our flat. It's a joke, ain't it?" She leaned back against the bed railing, her anger spent.

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"You didn't know?" Alice was amazed.

The woman laughed hysterically. "An' I think this farmer who is so good to give the people free houses maybe has swings for the kids. Swings! Hasn't even kitchens. Old stoves out in a barn we use. Hasn't even toilets. Outhouses in the fields we use."

"I didn't realize that the people who lived here . . . I thought they came here . . ." But Alice couldn't say to this stricken woman what she had been thinking just a few minutes before.

"Yeah. How'sa nice girl like you gonna know?" she asked. "Next door a woman got a no-good man. He walks out on her and the three kids two years ago and she goes to New Jersey in the fall for tomatoes and cranberries and she goes on the truck to Florida in winter for beans and to Tennessee for peanuts and strawberries in spring and back here in summer. She can't stop goin', goin', goin'. Her kids are like wild. No school even. Nothin'. Could happen to anybody like that. No houses in the city, no job to go back to. Keep movin' to keep alive."

"Look"—Alice was very much agitated—"it doesn't have to be like that for you. As soon as it stops raining, pea picking will begin, and you'll be able to make enough money to get back to Scranton."

"Money? From what I hear that's a laugh, too. No such money as the crew boss tells us. All made up. All lies."

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"I can't believe that, but then I couldn't have believed this unless I'd seen it myself." Although Alice was feeling sick she spoke warmly, "I'll help you. I'll do all I can."

"You're a very nice young girl, but what can you do?"

"I can see that some of the people I know in town find out about the camp. I've lived here all my life, but I never saw these camps except from the highway. I'm going to work here this summer to help make it a little more pleasant for you while you're here. I'm Alice Jordan. What's your name?"

"Tomaselli. Marie Tomaselli. Why you want to work here? I get away from here if I could."

"Because," Alice hesitated, "I've always wanted to work with people. I thought I'd have to go far away, but it's the people who matter, and they're right here. What happened to you has probably happened to most of the others here, too."

1 1 1

It was a very shaken girl who discovered without too much surprise that the old barn she had by-passed on the way up the row of shacks was none other than the "recreation center." Here Alice discovered Miss Anderson, the supervisor, and two assistants at work.

When Judith Anderson discovered what had happened to Alice, she was dismayed. "I should be sorry for you for going in heart first like that, but somehow I'm not. You've already covered an awful lot of ground. It

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might have taken weeks for you to get the tragic fact that a migrant is made — not born. They're people — not just a category as you thought. Women like Marie won't usually talk either, not after they've been migrants for a long time. They get their defenses up. They've got to believe it's all right; after a while they don't talk about it even inside themselves."

"I know I probably did it all wrong, Miss Anderson, but I'm not sorry. I had come to tell you I wasn't going to take this job, but now I want to know how I can help."

Two young assistants — Mildred Peterson, a law student at New York University, and Bill Whittier, studying for the ministry at Yale — had been off in a corner of the barn papering the work tables to be used for handicraft classes. They had listened intently to all that Alice had poured out.

Bill spoke up. "It seems to me you have a big job, Alice. The crops would rot if these men and women didn't come to harvest them, and your town would suffer economically. You go to a church here that probably supports missionary work, and yet you didn't know anything firsthand about these very migrants who are part-time members of your own community. It seems to me you're our town crier."

"That's all very well, Bill." Mildred's voice was tense with emotion. She knew what it was to come from the wrong side of the tracks and was inclined to believe that

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all the ills of the world were economic. "But what about the Tomasellis? Don't we do anything about them? This process of waking up the town is all very fine, but it'll take too long to help the Tomasellis very much. I think we ought to get hold of some money and send them back. The Legal Aid Society and one of the social agencies in Scranton ought to help them get reestablished."

Miss Anderson considered this for a moment. "What about the other families, Mildred, the ones whose stories we don't know? What about that woman next door to the Tomasellis? Where would we send her? She has no residence. She hasn't lived in any state long enough to enjoy any of the rights of an American citizen. She wouldn't be eligible for any kind of social aid anywhere. Her children don't even go to school. That's probably true of most of the families here. What I think we have to keep in mind is that we aren't here to try to do away with migrants as such. Modern farming needs traveling workers; they, in turn, need the work.

"What we are here for is to help these men and women where they are now. We've got to educate the people in the community at the same time — get them to accept as much responsibility for housing and sanitation for these part-time residents as they do for people who live here all year round.

"I'd like to see you wake up the town conscience, Alice. And Mildred can help the migrants to see their

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own need for better living and working conditions. And with you, Bill, to direct our religious program, we'll try to bring back some happiness that has been lost from these workers' lives. We'll need to remind ourselves and them constantly that here, as everywhere, the spirit of God is at work."

Not much more could be said at the moment, for some teen-age boys and girls began to arrive. Miss Anderson had invited them to come and help in the barn. Except for being a little thinner and more nervously aggressive, they weren't much different from any other young gang. Some of them got waylaid into reading the books they should have been unpacking and dusting. A few made nuisances of themselves, teasing to start in on the games they unearthed in the packing cases. But most of them pitched in and washed windows and whacked down cobwebs from the rafters. A trio of boys played sailors and did a noble job of "deck duty" mopping the floor.

By six o'clock the old barn had a new look. Bright travel posters from many lands decorated the walls. An old phonograph and a pile of records borrowed for the season from the Y.M.C.A. had been brought in. When the work was all done and the last of the children had departed for supper, Bill put on one of the records.

In spite of the antique machinery, Brahms' "Lullaby" was still a thing of beauty. Time and again Bill played it as the four weary Council workers tried to get enough energy to go to their rooming houses for showers

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and dinner. It was still playing when Bill started to carry out a carton of rubbish that had been overlooked.

Mildred surveyed the room. "It seems so inadequate." Her voice was bitter. All her doubts about working with a social agency, a church-sponsored one at that, flooded her mind. "Ping-pong, checkers, and a few old records in the face of such rock-bottom needs!"

Before Miss Anderson could answer, the attention of all four was drawn to the small, peaked face of a boy, frightened to be caught at the door that Bill had kicked open.

"Hello," said Bill. "Hey, don't run away! Come in and listen to the music a minute."

The boy had not been one of those who had been there earlier, but he must have been listening on the threshold a long time, for his shirt and hair were soaked with rain.

"Aw, music's for sissies."

"A man wrote it," Bill said, "a man called Brahms. It came into his mind one night as he sat by the bedside of a sick child."

"No! No!" the boy said violently. "Nobody's sick in that music. Everything's . . ." It was clear he couldn't find the words. " . . . all right."

The record came to an end unheeded, and before any of them could stop him, the boy slipped away.

Miss Anderson looked at the three young people. There was no need to say anything — the boy had an-

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swered Mildred. Each of the four from his separate world had heard that plea for everything to be all right just once. They had seen hunger for beauty and security where there was neither.

The next few days Alice spent visiting men and women she had always thought of as pillars of the town and church. She went to see the officials in the Board of Health, confident that all she had to do was to call their attention to the lack of garbage disposal and bathing facilities and the inadequate number of privies. She was shocked to find they knew all about it — had always known. "That camp's outside the town. It's up to the county." The county officials, in turn, passed the buck to the individual growers.

The grower at Highland Camp was polite but patronizing. "These migrants are tough, Alice. They thrive on what would kill you and me. They don't know any better. Believe me, little girl, I know from years of dealing with them foreigners — give them a palace and it would be a dump in no time."

When Alice pointed out that she was asking not for palaces but some extra outhouses and for garbage disposal and that while the migrants had Italian and Polish names, most of them were first generation Americans, he became impatient. "Now don't make me sorry I agreed to cooperate with this Home Missions Council outfit! The migrants come here of their own free will, don't they? And they stay, don't they?" And Alice,

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her emotions blocking her mental processes, found herself without an adequate answer.

Mildred also had frustrating experiences. In spite of all her efforts through health and sanitation pep talks, a few of the migrants continued to throw their slops out the doors and windows of their shacks. All of them left the common cookhouse without cleaning up. Some openly resented her "meddling." Others reacted with mumbled apologies. "We're just too tired to bother," they said.

When Miss Anderson returned from a trip to one of the several other camps she was supervising in the New York area, she called an emergency staff meeting. "Alice, do you realize that if you hadn't been a town resident, the grower here would probably have sent us all packing? You just can't change things overnight. Both you and Mildred are working a couple of levels higher than either the community or the migrants can take right now.

"Let me tell you about the first nursery for migrant children opened by the Home Missions Council in a camp not far from here. We got a few of the growers to help finance that first nursery, although they did it grudgingly. Called it 'coddling'. Before the days of that nursery, the whole migrant family went to the fields. Even the babies. They lay on blankets spread over newspapers under shade trees at the end of the rows.

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“Do you think the migrants were overcome with gratitude to have a cool, clean nursery to keep their little ones in out of the hot sun? Not on your life. They thought it very doubtful that college girls, even under the supervision of a trained older staff member, could take good care of their *bambinos*. It took a snake to get us going. Don’t laugh! It’s true!

“When a mother discovered a snake coiled up a couple of inches away from her precious *bambino*, she decided that even college girls couldn’t be that risky. We got the baby. In a week we cleaned up a rash he had from not being changed and washed often enough. How could they, out in the fields? Other mothers came to us with babies who had rashes, and soon we had most of the younger set in tow. Then the growers began to forget they’d once opposed the nursery plan. They were quick enough to see the economic value of having working mothers unharassed by babies and toddlers in the fields. And the program evolved into what it is today — a setup under state administration.”

“You mean the migrant child care centers required today by New York State law were originally a Home Missions Council idea and project?” Mildred was incredulous.

“Sure,” said Miss Anderson. “The same with the camp nurse idea. The first nurse to migrants anywhere in the United States was a Council missionary. And do you think the migrants were happy to have a registered

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nurse on the spot? Not a bit. That nurse had to beat down superstitious fear of medicine in many of the migrants as well as demonstrate to the grower that migrants, like anybody else, can work better if they're well."

"And as I understand it all," Bill said, "when enough people get the knowledge they ought to have about their own communities, the same thing will happen in housing and sanitation. We're in on the spade work, gals, and it's up to us to get the town interested in the living conditions of their guest workers."

"How right you are, Bill!" sighed Miss Anderson.

They drew up plans then for Mildred to develop an informal camp committee whereby the more responsible migrants would take the initiative in seeing that the camp was kept clean. They decided it would be a good move to put the camp manager on this committee. If the migrants came through, he would be sure to bring the attention of the grower to the fact that the migrants were ready to do their share.

When Bill approached the library trustees for books to be circulated among the migrants, some of the townspeople had a fit. "What! Let those people mess up our books!"

Alice stepped into the situation then with all she had learned from Miss Anderson. She asked Miss Kuhn, the head librarian — the most vocal objector to the loan of books for camp use — to come and give an evening of

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dramatic readings for the children. The librarian came reluctantly and only after having postponed the visit several times. The camp adults as well as the children showed up in droves, attracted by the novelty of having someone read to them. Used to audiences that took her time and talents for granted, Miss Kuhn was bowled over by the response and appreciation of the migrants. They wept and laughed while she read selections from *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* and afterwards told her she was wonderful. No one can resist being appreciated. She volunteered to come out one evening a week for the rest of the summer.

After that, as Miss Kuhn handed books across her library desk to the townspeople, she often suggested current stories and articles concerning America's migrants.

She talked freely about the migrants "right in our town" to anyone who appeared interested. She set up a display table in the lobby of the library exhibiting the bags and belts made in the camp craft classes. At the Business and Professional Women's Club luncheon, she devoted her annual speech to the Council work at Highland. And, of course, she saw to it that the camp got the books Bill had wanted for circulation.

"Atta gal," said Bill in praise of Alice, who had started this ball rolling. But he wasn't doing so badly either. He had organized indoor and outdoor games and fun for the younger boys, and now they followed him around like faithful shadows. It was disappointing to

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Bill that there were always fewer at the vespers than at the recreational programs. But many of the workers did come to the religious services, their green-stained, work-calloused hands folded and their faces uplifted expectantly.

Many were Roman Catholics and some were Protestants — or used to be, they all said — but most of them had become as alienated from the church as they were from all other aspects of community life. The vespers Bill conducted brought to the migrants an awareness of God such as they had never had before and a glimpse of something in life beyond work and sleep.

They had an affection for Bill that touched him and made him humble — the respect that those ignorant of book learning hold for those who have it without any show of superiority. Sometimes Bill went in the trucks with the pickers at dawn, working down the mile-long rows, the merciless sun beating on him as he stripped the peas from the uprooted vines. He could “take it” the migrants said in praise of him. They were proud, too, that he was willing to work side by side with them.

Mildred was learning that there are some things economics cannot solve. She kept trying to find the boy she had come to think of as the Lost Lullaby Boy, but none of the varied programs caught him. She had seen him but once since the night he had stood at the barn door. She could not speak to him then, for he had been trying to get his father, the only chronic drunk in camp, up the

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steps of their shack. The other migrants could tell her little about the boy. His name was Stanlis; his mother had died a couple of years ago, and his father had gone from bad to worse. This was their first summer as farm workers.

One evening when travel movies were being shown in the barn, Mildred slipped out determined to find Stanlis. Most of the shacks were empty, although a couple of the women were washing up in the cookhouse.

"See, Miss Mildred, how good I clean, huh?"

Mildred couldn't help laughing. "You make me feel like an old crosspatch."

"No, you ain't. Now everybody does their share and it ain't so burdensome."

Mildred was about to give up her search when she heard the sound of a guitar coming from the direction of the creek. She walked along the marshy path, remembering herself sitting long, long ago on the stoop of a Chicago tenement, thinking such things as this sad music was saying. She stood listening for quite a while before Stanlis saw her. Then he uttered an incredible oath that might have sent Alice or even Miss Anderson scrambling away. But Mildred had known all too well the sordid kind of life that bred such anger and desperation.

She took the key to the recreation center out of her seersucker suit pocket and extended it to him. "Here, go in at night when everybody's gone and play some of

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the records. The barn's far enough away from the shacks. No one will hear."

He did not take it. "Aw, leave me alone, will you?"

"If everybody had left me alone, I'd still be just like you." And then Mildred told him what she had never told anyone, not even her closest friend. "I'm telling you about my father because only you know what it's like. You've got to fight for everything twice as hard as all the other kids. You've got to learn to make the most of crumbs, and this key is a crumb. You love music and you ought to have it. Maybe you'll be as lucky as I was and find a generous friend who will help you get an education."

He took the key without a word and walked away.

Several nights later Mildred and Bill went to the barn to see if Stanlis was there. They heard him playing the piano with considerable skill. But when they went in, it was like trying to tame a wild animal to get him to go on playing. Mildred and Bill both worked on Stanlis, often without any hope that under the circumstances his anti-social defenses could be broken down. He seemed to change not at all.

One Sunday evening the phonograph broke down, and Stanlis offered to play the quiet music as the people assembled for vespers. It was the first time he had ever made a positive response. Mildred was so happy she had a good cry.

"What's the matter now?" Stanlis wanted to know.

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Bill put his hand on the boy's shoulder, the first time he had dared to touch him. "You see, Stanlis, we didn't think you liked us, and it makes Mildred happy to know you want to give us something."

Stanlis drew away, the old sharp look on his face. "What am I giving you?" he demanded suspiciously.

"Your gift of music."

It was obvious from the expression on Stanlis' face that the idea he had anything to give was new and interesting to him. So unusual was the music that came out of the piano — spontaneous, gifted, undisciplined music — that by the time vespers were over practically the entire camp was crowded at the door listening, asking for more.

Stanlis became the pride of Highland, his talent the migrants' common boast. After that Sunday evening he played regularly for vespers, square dances, and musical games. He was no longer spoken of in pitying whispers as "the drunk's son." He was "the musical kid." Before the summer was over, some of his more obvious kinks had disappeared, and he was hardly distinguishable from any of the other teen-age boys in the camp.

At their staff meetings the three young volunteers learned from Miss Anderson that an estimated 2,500,000 migrants follow the crops across the United States every year. An army of Americans without home or community, outcastes from normal life, they sacrifice

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with every move their right to schooling for their children, their right to vote.

Mildred and Alice and Bill learned, too, that what happened in New York's Highland Migrant Camp was being duplicated through the work of hundreds of college students like themselves from Michigan to California. They read Howard Whitman's article in *Collier's* magazine¹ describing the Home Missions Council as " . . . a Protestant church group representing twenty-three denominations which has done the most work for migrants with the least noise" and knew it was all too true. Sometimes it seemed as if nobody else cared.

When the three sat down to write their reports of the summer, they asked themselves how they could tell the whole story. There was the story of what had happened to each of them as individuals, the story of their fellowship together, and the story of what little they had been able to do.

Mildred wrote in frank self-appraisal, "I was afraid a church-sponsored job would mean I'd have to teach the Ten Commandments and Old Testament stories. I was so concerned about social issues! But I didn't think anyone else was, especially church people! I thought I'd have to be prim and proper and never have any fun. I was so wrong. Working with the migrants has been one of the social action high spots of my life. I found that

¹"Heartless Harvest," by Howard Whitman, from *Collier's*, September 13, 1947.

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people one meets in church work can be lots of fun — and that they have the depth I look for in people, depth I have often sought in vain.”

Bill spoke of his summer's experience before the various young people's church and college groups in New Haven. “The need for leadership is very great. Even though the job is discouraging to the point of seeming hopelessness at times, it did change the course of one of these youngster's lives.” He told about Stanlis. The father had been hospitalized as he should have been long before, and Stanlis was going to high school in Syracuse. He was living in a real home with a real family, taking care of the furnace and the lawns in exchange for his room and board. The music director of the high school he attended was giving him the lessons he needed to develop his natural talent.

Alice wrote, “Realizing that the community as a whole was not aware of the needs in these migrant camps, we made every effort to encourage people to come out to the camps and take an active part in our program.” No, she couldn't say that housing and sanitation had been improved. But many people in the churches and the town knew now, and so many of them were speaking to the grower about conditions that he was talking of replacing the old rows of shacks with new, individual cabins and showers.

The magnitude and importance of it all is revealed in the concluding words in Alice's report:

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“There was a lump in my throat as I watched the Tomaselli family pull out with the twins and the two boys wedged into the back seat among clothing and boxes, the little trailer behind them piled high with bedding and furniture — all of them going they knew not where.”

chapter two

The Bridge of Concrete

THEY WERE A NEW KIND OF PEOPLE for the Ozarks. They by-passed the playlands and went to Shannondale, far from tourist attractions and resort hotels. They slept in the loft of a goat barn, in a log cabin, and in tents. For the most part they were high school students from Chicago, members of the University Laboratory School at the University of Chicago — the average kind of American boy or girl who hollers, “Oh, Mom!” when the dinner dishes are mentioned. They didn’t grumble much at Shannondale. Oh, maybe some of them overslept once in a while, but who wouldn’t after a day of pouring concrete?

From various colleges and jobs several older work campers came to Shannondale with these high school students. All together they represented about ten different denominations, and the Shannondale community they had come to learn about and work with is an Evangelical and Reformed Church rural mission center.

THE BRIDGE OF CONCRETE

The workers laid a concrete foundation for a well house and celebrated its completion with a picnic in Troublesome Hollow. They sweated as they pitched hay hour after hour in the hot sun and cooled off evenings at swimming spots along Sinkin' Creek and at Blue Hole. They built a low-water bridge at Barren Fork Crossing and square-danced on it to the tune of mountain music. They labored without pay but received the dividends that come from creative physical work. They learned to have a good time without the props of dance halls, movies, or cars. They all acquired the habit of thinking about what they did.

The story is best recorded in the diaries of the campers and the work log of the counselors. Here are a few random days out of Linda's record:

June 27: Well, here I am writing by a kerosene lamp! It's maddeningly dark outside; even the stars are bug-eyed. I feel kind of funny being up here in a log cabin with a lot of other girls instead of in my own room in the apartment. The boys are living in a loft over the goat barn. Come to think of it, I've never seen a goat! Will make an appointment to meet one tomorrow morning. Morning around here, they say, is 5:45 A.M. Ouch! Right after supper we had Meditations. I was afraid there would be stuff like that. I didn't know what to meditate about, so I counted up the boys. Enough to go round, all right, and a couple of them are dream-boats. Someone just made a crack about lights being out

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at 9:30. Well, nobody's going to tell me when I have to go to bed!

July 3: You'd think I'd committed a sin or something the way everybody looked at me because I went to Salem on a date with Jesse last night. We're supposed to get acquainted with the kids of this community, aren't we? Nobody would have known if Mrs. Watkins hadn't taken it on herself to wait up for me. Everybody kidded me about loafing on the job today. "Didn't get enough sleep, did you? Ha-Ha!" They make me sick. Let them go chop their own wood if their idea of fun is to sit around the fireplace and gab. And I hate weed-digging!

July 5: Elsie took notes on a talk by Mr. Vincent Bucher, the Evangelical and Reformed Church pastor here, and I borrowed them to put in my diary. He said, "The aim of this mission is to enrich the lives of the isolated people of this area. Due to very poor roads and sparsely settled country and the fact that few have cars, our people have little contact with one another and with the outside world. The Community Center gives them a point of meeting that is as nearly central as possible and a purpose for meeting. In emergencies, the Community Center car acts as ambulance to the nearest doctor or hospital. We supplement the activities of the Agricultural Extension Service and other Missouri State agencies in improving livestock and forest practices and in the revival of folk activities. You'll see and

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learn for yourself such singing games as 'Pig in the Parlor,' 'Old Jim Price,' and 'Pawpaw Patch.'

"Once a month families come to the Community Center for church. Other Sundays the church travels to them, and services are held in scattered schoolhouses throughout the hills. The bridge you're going to build will mean that next year when the spring rains come, the people on the far side of Sinkin' Creek won't be cut off from the rest of us. It will mean transportation of vital fire-fighting equipment in the dry season when the lookout tower warns of big 'smokes'."

Mr. Bucher then took us on a tour of the grounds, pointing out the stone goat barn, the picnic benches and tables, the driveways and near-by roads. And what do you know — campers from last year and the year before had built them all. Now that I know what it's all about, I wish we'd get going on something big like the bridge they're always talking about. But no, we're supposed to wait till we're in condition for heavy work. Well, the only condition weed-pulling puts me in is mental. It gives me fits!

July 7: Am I thrilled! Everybody got project assignments, and I'm one of the Bridge Squad! I'd rather do that than pitch hay or dig the trench for the well house. Pauline had the nerve to say it was misplaced judgment to put me on the bridge. Just jealousy! I'll show her. Hauling logs is easy when you know how. Wrote Dad I'm going to learn how to mix cement. He'll drop dead!

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Wish he could see me hauling gravel. We're going to have to haul about 100 cubic yards of gravel for the cement mixer. Wait till I start talking about clay bottoms and rock beds back in Chi this fall. They'll all be bug-eyed.

Discussion around the fireplace was interesting tonight. We had visitors — missionaries from Japan. Missionaries sure lead the rugged life, believe me. They said it is just like what we're doing, only more so, and all year round and with people of a different language and culture. Jeepers! During Meditations I thought about how hard it must be to rebuild a city after a war like the one they told us about — especially when I thought how long it's going to take to build our bridge.

July 13: Just came home from staying overnight with the Stuarts in Troublesome Hollow. Their kitchen is bigger than our apartment living room, and everybody sits around the table, even when it's all cleared off — sewing, reading, or just gabbing. No radio to tune in on, no phone to call up friends — natch! No electricity! I was telling them about how I go to high school at the U. of Chicago in ten minutes on the El.

Mary Stuart and her brother walk two miles to get to Highway 19 to catch the bus and then travel 25 miles to their high school. Jeepers! Mary says she'd rather do that than ride one second on a train up in the air. She's never even been in an elevator! But then I'd never been in a goat barn, so I guess we're even. They have silent

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grace at morning and at night, and they aren't ministers or anything, just ordinary people! At noon they sing it this way:

If we have earned the right to eat this food,
Happy indeed are we,
But if unmerited thy gifts to us,
May we more faithful be.

It's kind of sad, for it seems to me they certainly deserve all they get.

July 16: Are we girls ever doing nobly with pick and shovel! Six hundred and ninety-two bags of cement were loaded, unloaded, and stacked up. We worked with a neighbor's team and the loan of a machine from the Missouri Conservation Department in scooping dirt and gravel out of the way of the bridge. Sure wish Dad could see me! The Well House Squad finished the concrete foundation and started on the walls. Other campers are pitching hay on neighboring farms, sunburning and singing as they work. One of them learned "Men of the Soil" and sang it as grace one evening. When they say "neighbors" and "neighboring farms" around here, they mean anything from 1 to 41 miles away!

July 18: Oh, how I ache! In all 206 bones. We're working in the creek up to our knees in water. I don't mind, except the top of me gets feverish and the other end of me freezes. One of the girls stayed in bed with a head cold — I think she's shirking. And I have no use

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for some of these pale sisters and brothers around here who have to go sit under a shade tree every five minutes. If I got sun-dizzy that often, I'd go commit myself to a rest home!

Skipped out again for a date with Jesse tonight in Salem but came home early. Nothing to do. No shows, no bowling alleys, no dance halls, just nothing but hills and hollows and "yon creek." I missed a surprise party for the campers at the Community Center. Over 100 people from the hills came, all the young ones. And that's something when you consider there's only 6 people per square mile around here. Everybody learned mountain music and fiddle dancing. Just my luck to have missed it. Sounds as if they had fun. I certainly didn't, and it was mean of Jesse not to tell me about the party. He knew all right!

August 3: The bridge is beginning to look like a bridge, even to me. Some state roadmen came by to have a look at it this morning. Did they ever say nice things! They just couldn't tell from seeing us working which of us were community people and which were campers. Right up until I opened my mouth and they heard my accent, they thought I was an Ozark girl!

I have been too bone-weary to write in my diary the last few days so will have to catch up on what we've been doing. Trenches for the concrete walls of the ford have been dug, and the center for the slab is leveled off. The water pump failed again, but we all kept right on

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and worked several days in about two feet of water. The pump is repaired now, thank goodness. We keep having gravel cave-ins in the trenches, but we shovel them out again! The form sections are going in one at a time. It's so hot in the middle of the day that I'm all for beginning work at 4 A.M. and quitting at noon.

Last night Pete and Wilbur put on a one-act play they wrote about work campers. It was a howl, and lots of the community folks who came to see it laughed harder than I ever saw anybody laugh before. Where those kids got time to write it and work it up, I don't know. They certainly didn't take a minute from bridge-building to do it.

We went swimming at Blue Hole after work, and all of a sudden I felt terribly alive, so happy I could have hugged a tree. Right out of a clear blue sky I started saying over and over inside my head a part of a poem I didn't even know I knew, but I just felt that way and there it was: "My heart leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky." And what was really funny was there wasn't any rainbow — it hasn't even rained here for weeks.

We had another visitor today, a Friend (Quaker) from Philadelphia, young and good looking. He told us all about life in a Federal prison — and he hadn't done a thing, only refused to go to war! He was a C.O., and that doesn't mean Commanding Officer either, as I thought. I just wouldn't have believed there were peo-

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ple like him outside of the movies, but there he was, as casual as could be and looking just like any of the rest of us. His talk about what he believed and why it was worth going to jail for was terrific.

I guess I was kind of inspired by what he said for I spoke right up at Meditations. I said the more you find out about things for yourself, the better it is for you. When you really don't know about a thing, you fill up the gap with other people's ideas, and half the time maybe they don't know either. Then I got embarrassed, but nobody noticed it for the director said I had made an important point. He was glad I brought it up, I guess, for he talked quite a bit about it. He called it knowledge versus prejudice, which is just what I meant. He said that religious experience is like that, too. Religion doesn't mean very much until you really think it over and begin to understand it yourself. Well, good-night, dear Diary. I could write more, but it's time to put out the lamps.

August 5: Yesterday we poured our first cement at the ford — a 70-foot foundation wall. Today we moved the forms and repeated it on the other side. It's beautiful! Visiting engineers said it rivals the bridge built by professionals on Route 66. Now the forms around the concrete have been removed again and are being replaced for the middle third of the ford. This is the tough part — right through the heart of the stream. Even with two pumps going now, we're working in bathing

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suits, waist-deep in water. All hands have been at the ford every day. Even the kids doing their weekly stint at K.P. duty rush through that work to get back to "The Job."

Last night we had our first rain in four and a half weeks! Water and ice shortages are really something here in the hills. Tuesday afternoon about five of the boys went out fire-fighting with the forestry service. They came back at 2 A.M. and have been telling us about it ever since. It was grim all right. Water is something I have a new respect for.

Dr. Hart of Salem, the nearest physician for miles around, and Mrs. Hart were our guests for supper to-night. You could see that the city kids were impressed with the stories he told — me, too. You don't lift your phone and call your doctor in the Ozarks. You either take the patient to the doctor or the call for him is relayed by neighbors all down the line.

August 10: Dad came this morning and everybody said nice things about me to him. They all liked him, too. Even Paul, who is just too superior for words, was more polite to Dad than I can say he's been to some of our guests. I never thought before that being a lawyer was interesting. Dad told all about his work at supper just as if he were one of our forum visitors! And every once in a while, right in the middle of one of his stories, he'd wink at me. I felt like little Miss Somebody all right. When I got him alone, we had more stuff to talk

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about than we ever had before. He's going to stay overnight at Mr. Bucher's house not far from our log cabin.

This morning we all went to church in the Community House. When people go to church in the Ozarks, they have to travel so far they make a day of it. They bring their lunches in baskets and park them on the church porch. After church we all sat at long tables and benches that last year's campers had built and that some of this year's group painted, if you please. Then we played baseball and pitched horseshoes. Even Paul, who is always making wisecracks about "rustic antics," got in on the horseshoes when Dad did. Dad rang up quite a score of ringers.

Dad says we should be nicer to Paul. Paul's guardian is one of Dad's clients, but that isn't the reason Dad wants me to be nicer to Paul. Dad says that Paul is really a very poor boy, which is funny when you think he drives his own convertible Buick to high school. Dad's angle is that Paul has too much money for his own good and that this is probably the first time in his life he's been in a situation where having trust funds and stuff doesn't cut any ice. It sure doesn't here in the hills because the things that show in a person here aren't clothes or cars or fat allowances, because everybody dresses alike and there's no going around showing off. Dad says Paul is awful bright but cynical. Well, all that he does around here is poke fun at everybody and everything. That doesn't seem very bright to me.

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The payoff came when Dad was saying good-night to me. "I can't call you 'Baby' any more, Linda. You've grown up." From Dad that is delirium! I've been trying to break him of that "Baby" habit for years.

Seeing Dad made me realize that since I've been here I haven't once thought about Mom's leaving Dad and me. And I'm glad, for thinking about that used to make everything black outside and sick inside. Here we've been talking at mealtimes about mixed-up people. When I think about Mom as mixed up, it makes it easier to think that she could pass us up for somebody else. God, don't ever let me be so mixed up that I will hurt anyone as wonderful as Dad!

August 12: The most exciting thing. Pete got knocked out by a stone that some character whose name I shall not mention tossed over the side of the loading truck. He didn't mean to hit Pete, of course, but what a dumb thing to do! While the rest of us blubbered around, Paul took charge and brought Pete to and then insisted on driving him into town in the truck for an X-ray. When they came back, Pete said everything was O.K. and that Paul had been a real pal — he'd even offered to pay for the X-ray.

The worst part of the tough third of the bridge has been conquered. We are now ready for the surface slab. On Thursday a delegation of engineers and roadway experts arrived. They not only admired the work but said that we deserve the highest praise for our "persever-

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ance against tough odds." We're all determined to finish this bridge for our friends.

August 14: Saturday we took a "crawling" trip through Kelley's Cave. Was it ever fun! Paul was my co-crawler. We had quite a serious talk. Paul says he can't stand any girl who isn't intelligent. And I can't stand boys who aren't. Isn't that an amazing coincidence?

August 20: "Finish the bridge" was our theme song all last week. From 8 to 10 different local people worked every day with all of us campers. On Wednesday night we had a party right on the nearly finished bridge. Friday night two visiting Evangelical and Reformed Church ministers came with their wives for a visit and gave us some talks about their denomination and the work it does in other places besides here.

Sunday the services were at the Community House, followed by a picnic dinner and dedication ceremony at the bridge. A reporter from the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* was there! He made a speech and then he said he was going to write us up. Representatives from the Missouri Conservation Commission came, too. And over 100 local people from as far as 25 miles away! Cars, wagons, and teams were parked everywhere!

August 21: My last night of kerosene lamps, goats, ditch-digging, and wonderful, wonderful people. We had a play party at the crossing tonight. Some of us square-danced on the bridge. We all sang like mad and

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scared away the whippoorwills. When everybody started singing "Auld Lang Syne," I nearly bawled. I went off in the woods to see if I couldn't snap out of it. I hate a drip. I listened to the frogs on the creek bank. Back in Chicago it will be the grind of traffic on Lake Shore that I'll hear, and the sky there will be a pinkish veil and the stars faded. Here it's always velvet black and the stars are silver. I feel terrible. Leaving a place is almost like dying.

Mrs. Watkins came after me. She's always trying to mother me, and I find it kind of nice. It's funny about people — they're not so different from me as I used to think. She knew what I was thinking. "Don't feel you're leaving part of yourself behind, Linda," she said. "Look at it this way — you're taking part of all this with you."

I promise myself that I shall never, never forget this summer, not ever as long as I live!

August 22: I am writing this at home in my own little bedroom even though I just promised Dad I'd go to bed. He has said good-night three times! I guess he's glad to have me back in the apartment with him. But I've got to get our evaluation and self-analysis session all down — and *something else*.

We held it outdoors in the early morning, and a beautiful closing worship service followed. Then suddenly I knew what writers mean when they speak of a "cathedral hush." I had it inside me on the banks of a Missouri creek. Funny, isn't it? A couple of months ago

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I thought you had to have a building to have a church at all.

Paul gave the very best evaluation, which was a surprise to everyone but me. I asked him to write it down for me to keep in my diary, and he did. I told him it was real literature, and he said I was just about the most intelligent girl he'd ever met! And would I like to go to plays and things with him in Chi this fall and winter! Would I!

Dear Diary: Now I am going to copy what Paul said so I'll have it always, for I have a feeling he is going to be something very special in my life. This is what he wrote:

"I never knew there was such courage in the world. The courage of these people of the hills; the courage of that grand guy, their pastor, and his wife and children; the courage of those missionaries who skipped telling us about how lonely it must have been sometimes for them out in Japan; and the courage of that fellow who stepped out of the big parade and took it on the chin for the cause of peace.

"This summer has given me a new slant on the church, on life. It has shown me I've got to pitch in and get my hands dirty and not sit back and wait for the other fellow to do something and growl at his inefficiency. I have seen that the role of the church is more than just soul-saving as I thought. The church today is concerned with the whole personality of the people it serves — their bodies and minds as well as their souls.

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Because this summer's work has changed my outlook on life and my attitude about the effectiveness of Christian workers, I'm going back to school with a real question mark as to whether or not I ought to prepare myself to join their ranks."

Good-night, dear Diary. This has been the most wonderful summer in my whole life!

chapter three

From White Collars to Overalls

STUDENTS-IN-INDUSTRY! IN CHICAGO forty of them stacked bacon, unloaded tin cans for dog food, operated press drills, wrapped candy bars. In the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul fifty of them followed a hardy career not covered in any college curriculum: driving a city hack, frying hamburgers in a one-arm diner, packing olives, bundling laundry in a cleaning emporium. By the summer of 1948 they were operating over 350 strong in six main cities across the nation from Los Angeles to New York.

In Hartford, Connecticut, there were fourteen men and sixteen women, representing nineteen colleges, coming from fourteen states, Finland, China, and Canada. Their average age was twenty-one, and they represented enough denominations, North and South, to fill a well packed paragraph. They were the New England section of a nation-wide project sponsored by the National Student Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. They came to learn

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by the work of their hands and to interpret within the framework of their Christian faith the economic, racial, political, and social problems of a great industrial city.

Out of middle-class backgrounds, rural and urban, the thirty students who came to Hartford to work for two summer months as factory employees experienced for themselves the drain of an eight- to ten-hour day on muscles, mind, and spirit.

This energetic group took up residence in Hosmer Hall at Hartford Theological Seminary the afternoon of June 24. The quiet reserve with which they looked one another over gave no warning to the corridors of Hosmer that such behavior was purely temporary. In practically no time at all they turned out to be a fun-loving, serious-minded, and wholesomely coordinated group that would have disarmed the cynic who thinks there's no hope from the young for the old world today.

The first night four of the sixteen-member Advisory Committee met and briefed the "industrial interns" on the project and the city of Hartford. This committee of leading Hartford citizens included such a heterogeneous group as the president of the local C.I.O., a job placement executive from the United States Employment Office, a professor of sociology, and the owner of a manufacturing company employing nine thousand hands.

Next morning thirty alarm clocks in Hosmer went off in dawn-shattering unison to prepare the students to jump the first hurdle — "pounding the pavement" to

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get their own jobs. For several days the most common greeting was, "Did you find anything today?" And the password to a moment of fame and glory was to come home to the "family" shouting, "I got a job!" Before the first week was over all thirty of them were on the payrolls of Hartford industries as screw packer, concrete block piler, machine assembler, power press operator, meter tester, parts straightener, truck driver, and so on.

Their wages ranged from a low of sixty-five cents an hour to a high of \$1.05. Sinister possibilities of a class system arose, but the adoption of "We're in the same boat, Brother" as the group theme song squelched any bourgeois tendencies in the dollar-an-hour boys.

A mock movement was started by a few ardent feminists. It was pointed out that inasmuch as women are paid less for the same work as men, the idealistic men of Hosmer ought to be willing to pool their wages and let everybody share and share alike. The stronger sex, however — dwelling on the fact that men have to buy the orchids and pick up the soda checks — held out for keeping all of their "take-home pay."

These students lived cooperatively. The boys and girls shared equally the household tasks: cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing, and budgeting. The thirty were a sight to behold every morning as they started for work in sleepy-eyed bunches, a wave of overalls, bandanna-ed heads, and mixed-up lunch bags. Some

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hiked to their jobs, others swayed on the crowded buses, startling the regular commuters with song and chatter.

The average eight-hour work day of the Students-in-Industry began at 6:30, or 7:00, except for a couple dubbed the "leisure class" who started at 8 A.M. About 4 P.M. the first shift began to drag home, followed at intervals by the others, all looking like chimney sweeps. Between 4 and 6 P.M. the showers of Hosmer were on full tilt. Tributes to "Sweet Adeline" could be heard above the rush of cleansing waters.

By 6 o'clock, when they looked like college students again, the hour of doubt arrived as to whether the "grits contingent" from the South or the New England "boiled dinner demons" were going to come through with a meal.

Room and board at Hosmer, under the cooperative living plan, worked out at an average of \$11.00 a week for each person, depending on food costs. If the food committee for the week was composed of dainty five-foot macaroni-and-cheese addicts, the bills were modest. But when the committee had a couple of rangy, definitely steak-minded six-footers on it, the bills soared.

Supper was often a hilarious occasion at which everybody talked at once, vying for sympathy from the "family" in their on-the-job problems with Simon Legree foremen, blistered fingers, and aching backs. Oftentimes, too, it became a very serious session as they listened to sobering reports of lunch-hour conversations.

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“What would you have said,” Charles B. Mitchell, typewriter case assembler, alias a Wesleyan University student, asked the group, “to a guy who said to me half jokingly this noon, ‘You know, I wish they’d use a whip on us — at least it would break the monotony’?”

It was the same kind of problem posed by Jean Bamforth from Pembroke College when she reported the girl co-worker who said, “I pack screws nine hours a day, day after day and week after week. If I didn’t do it, I wouldn’t eat and somebody else just like me would come and do it. Do you know how lucky you are? Do you? You can get out of here and get yourself some work that means something!”

These students discovered that the numbing monotony of mass production, with no outlet for self-expression, has taken the meaning out of life itself for many laborers. They came to understand why the routine-drugged worker seeks outlets in movie attendance, excessive drinking, and illicit sexual activities. They began to understand how slavish devotion to cults and ideologies proclaiming the superiority of a worker’s race or nationality could be developed in him by false prophets. Cogs in a wheel, workers with a spark of life left, seized upon whatever made them feel needed or superior.

These were but a few of the factors the students had not been aware of from textbook study of problems of industrial America. What to do about it was one of the questions the students asked the labor and manage-

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ment experts, only to find they had no adequate answers.

After the Dish Squad had cleaned up, everybody gathered in the lounge for vesper services, which each of the group took his turn in leading. They took many forms — sentence prayers, singing, short talks, meditation, Bible readings. They covered many themes — the need for service, the importance of the individual, the awareness of God, love, the Trinity. These services helped to deepen the sense of purpose in the group.

Evenings were given over largely to examination of the days' experiences in group seminars where representatives of employee, employer, government, community, and religion presented their interpretation of the problems of labor and management. Questions arising out of situations known only to those who have worked as these students worked, stumped many of the experts. Discussions were often hot and always lively.

Seminar speakers from the outside included such people as the political editor of the *Hartford Times*, the director of the Diocesan Institute for Labor, personnel managers and vice-presidents of the city's largest industries, Hartford ministers and social workers, physicians and nurses in industrial health services, the secretary of the New England Student Christian Movement, union officials, a state senator, a representative from the National Association of Manufacturers, and so on. Discussions with the speaker and with one another

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long after the guest departed often lasted far into the night.

On many evenings the students invited friends from the factories to join them for dinner, vespers, and seminars. A couple of week ends were devoted to open house, and although most of the guests were fellow workers, a few of the "interns" brought their wealthy bosses and high-powered personnel managers to see how the other half lived. In turn, the students went individually and as a group to factory workers' homes, company outings, and union meetings. Their week ends were as varied and exciting as thirty agile young minds and bodies could make them.

From their scrapbook, "Keyhole," comes this account of their Fourth of July celebration:

"Our Independence Day festivities began in the afternoon with a parade. Although we had no surviving members of the Army of the Potomac or the G.A.R. in our group, Yale and Georgia Tech were able to supply us with a 'Baby July 4' and a classy drum majorette in the persons of Bob and George. The band that provided contrapuntal, atonal rhythm for the marchers consisted of Sousahose (Si), washerhorn (Ed), perpetual comb (Dud), muffinette (Carol), clanging gong (Phyl). After a warm-up scavenger hunt, we began an epoch-making softball game which ended in a 17-17 tie.

"We shared our supper with the bugs on the Seminary lawn, then launched into the evening program.

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Hidden talent came into the open as the four girls from Spelman College harmonized and pranced. Pekka bowdlerized a translation of the Finnish ballad of 'Bill, the Buccaneer,' and our ten Underwood wage earners put their gripes into a chorus line routine. As a final display of our independence, we snake-danced to Petersen's for double malteds, serenaded the popeyed customers with 'Zum Gali-Gali,' then marched home, singing hallelujahs."

Other week ends saw them exploring Hartford, touring by invitation the settlement houses, the police department, the newspaper plants, and a couple of near-by Connecticut textile mills. Some of them went to concerts at the Yale Summer School of Music in Norfolk while others journeyed to Tanglewood, Massachusetts, to take in a session of the Berkshire Music Festival. Most of the group invaded New York City for a week end of sightseeing. They boarded Fifth Avenue buses to Harlem housing projects and went aboard the Floating Hospital. Those from the South and the West, who had never seen New York before, gaped at the sight of Times Square at twelve o'clock on Saturday night. Sunday morning they were escorted down the aisle of Riverside Church to a special section roped off for members of the Hartford Project.

Their days on the job were long and weary. At the noon whistle they arose with gratitude from their benches and machines and went with their fellow work-

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ers to eat in company lunchrooms and on company lawns. An account of their trips and what the visiting specialist had said in seminar the night before always proved an easy conversational lead. A common reaction was, "You kids know more about this city than I do, and I've been here ten years!" Almost daily some one of them had opportunity to pass along constructive thoughts on racial prejudice, religious bigotry, and anti-union propaganda.

What did they learn? From Jerome Davis, professor at Hiram College and founder of the Religion and Labor Foundation, they got the motto, "Adventuring for the right is the greatest fun in life." Dr. Charles Chakorian, professor of sociology at Hartford Theological Seminary, pointed out that cooperation is needed in all communities and that religious and social agencies tend at present to compete with one another instead of working together. They listened to pleas by management for understanding of its responsibility to the stockholder. They heard pleas by labor for the right of the working man to a wage that would sustain the average American family in dignity and security.

Some of the more conservative speakers were given a rough hour by a few left-wing Students-in-Industry. The more radical speakers were often treed by provocative questions from the conservative members in the student group. It would be quite safe to say that none of the thirty went home certain that there was only one

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point of view. All felt deeply the repeated challenge of the seminar speakers for more young people to prepare themselves for careers in statesmanship, social ministry, and industrial relations.

"Labor and management need trained personnel who can establish lines of communication between them, people who really care for their fellow men, not abstractly but personally, and who know their needs from the inside," said Dudley S. Hinds, a Tennessean from the University of Wisconsin. He was one of the group's first union members and even then was planning to prepare himself for a mission in politics.

"The foreign student," said Pekka Mannio of Finland, a student at Columbia University, "gets a far more full and true picture of American life during a summer in this kind of project than during a whole year of college studies. . . . It is my definite intention to agitate for projects similar to the Students-in-Industry in Scandinavian colleges."

"This experience in cooperative living," Charlotte Snow, student in a Massachusetts college, said, "and work in the factory have given me a realization of the emptiness in the spiritual lives of many human beings and have made me feel more strongly the importance of Christian love and fellowship."

Ellsworth S. Grant, vice-president of the Allen Manufacturing Company, said, "I feel that the Students-in-Industry program is a practical way of in-

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roducing college young men and women to the environment of factory and office through actual work experience. The students I have seen are intelligent, anxious to learn, cooperative, and — I might add — in need of the opportunity to see both sides of the industrial picture, both management's and the worker's."

Esther Wilson, a factory worker in Hartford, said, "Sure you can use my name. I owe those students something. They showed me what a stick-in-the-mud I was becoming. I'd dropped my church and high school contacts because I thought I was too tired to do anything but go to the movies, put up my hair, and sleep. These college kids put in as hard a day as I did. They studied at night and had enough gumption to make friends and find fun in a city I thought was dead. They even got up Sunday mornings to go to church, too. Gripping doesn't get you anywhere, and doing something about your life doesn't take genius or a college education. They gave me and some of the others here a shot in the arm we all needed."

A Hartford union official added, "Labor is crying out for understanding from a white-collar group such as this who are going to become our personnel administrators, our social workers, our managers, our politicians, and our religious directors of tomorrow. To think of hundreds of them across this country doing what these thirty did at Hartford gives me great hope for a creative leadership on the industrial front."

FROM WHITE COLLARS TO OVERALLS

The National Student Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. have conducted Students-in-Industry groups since the first one started in Denver, Colorado, in 1920. During the depression years the project was suspended when students, like millions of workers, could find no employment. Today the Y's and other agencies as well are working to extend the Students-in-Industry program. Students do not take jobs away from workers who need them more — most of these young people would work anyway during the summer to earn part of their college fees. Under this project, with its accent on Christian fellowship and interpretation, the daily work takes on more meaning for themselves and the people these students will some day serve as professional leaders.

Nowhere has the Students-in-Industry program and accomplishment been better summed up than in the following lines from a dramatic choral reading written by the 1947 Chicago student working group:

NARRATOR:

We students have gazed into the microscope . . .

We've trained a telescope on Jupiter's nine moons. . . .

But when we posed the question, "What has man made of man?"

The microscope grew sightless and the telescope myopic. . . .

SOLO:

So . . . I squeezed into the sleepy seven a.m. crowd on the clanging streetcar. . . .

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I filled out applications which they were glad to keep on file — just in case something should turn up,

— And in the evening I was tired:

But on the second day, as I pushed my way through the sweaty going-home crowd, I had a job. . . .

I could start looking for myself — looking for man. . . .

NARRATOR:

And as the muscles tightened, elbows skinned, hands blistered, and arches strained, man's expulsion from the Garden of Eden became very real to us.

CHORUS:

"In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread, till thou return unto the ground. For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

SOLO:

Who has become the muscle of the shovel?

VOICES:

Who is the automaton guiding the lathe?

Who is it, created in your image, God, and now the reflection of a machine?

CHORUS:

We!

We!

The people!

We learned that in the large-scale industry of today there has been taken from many workers' lives the meaning of love, of self-hood, of work, of life itself.

NARRATOR:

We have seen, too, some of the more worthwhile channels through which . . . they have discovered the living God.¹

¹From *The Intercollegian*, February, 1948. Used by permission.

chapter four

Piecowork in Brotherhood

*G*T IS NOT GIVEN TO EVERY MAN to back his truck into a dining room and to sleep blissfully in a tool shed. When Gerry Hutchinson looked over the abandoned R.C.A.F. Machine Shop at the Brantford, Ontario, Airport, he didn't see the dust-covered masses of machinery, the labyrinth of pipes along the walls, and the oil-soaked wooden floors. He just saw a great deal of badly needed space. In a city where there were three hundred families clamoring for housing, Gerry had been beating his brains out trying to find living quarters for seventeen incoming residents. Time was getting short and this was it. Smiling wryly, he decided that not even the most house-hungry family in Brantford would claim that he was taking away needed shelter from the community.

That was on May 14. By June 1, electricians and plumbers had given R.C.A.F. Building No. 24 the rudimentary equipment for kitchen and showers. Partitions

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set off men's and women's sleeping quarters. The rest of the space was a combination dining room, chapel, and garage.

"Of course, it isn't Valhalla! It's basic!" Gerry explained to the first batch of open-mouthed arrivals. And "Basic" it was from that time on. "Use your imagination and get a move on." They found themselves cleaning away the rubble, hauling machinery aside, covering the floor with roofing, and saying to the next batch of wide-eyed arrivals, "Makeshift? Just use your imagination, see? 'Basic' is our happy home."

Gerry Hutchinson was not the patriarch of a large tribe suffering from multiple eviction. He was "father for a summer" to an international family of ten Canadians, five Americans, and one Trinidadian. In other words, he was the director of "Basic," the Brantford Airport Student-in-Industry Camp co-sponsored by the Student Christian Movement and the Christian Work Camp Fellowship of Canada. Committees from these sponsoring organizations and the chairman of the C.W.C.F., a resident minister, and religious leaders in Brantford assisted the director in establishing and fostering the camp.

By June 8 all seventeen campers were on location. They had become accustomed to looking up from a plate of roast beef to see a Ford truck parked near the table where normally a tea wagon might be expected. They had accepted a cheesecloth-draped loading plat-

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form as a chancel. They were reconciled to a kitchen that would have given a permanent neurosis to the staff of *House Beautiful*. But these were by no means the most spectacular adjustments required of this group.

For a summer, seventeen university students were dedicating themselves to an uncharted detour from the straight highway that leads to professional careers. The detour was to carry them along the rocky road of the average Canadian laborer, even including his housing problems. The majority of the seventeen campers became spinach, strawberry, pea, and bean packers in a Brantford canning factory. Some of the men heaved pig iron in the foundries, and several of the women stood at looms in the textile plants through an eight-hour day, five and a half days a week. All of them — from Vancouver to Halifax, from New York to Trinidad — had in common these objectives: to save needed money for the next term's college fees, to gain firsthand knowledge for social service or ministerial vocations, to make new friends, to experience living in a group fellowship, and to seek a greater insight into the power and meaning of Christianity.

"An experience we shall never forget!" Mariko Tokunaga from the University of Western Ontario wrote. "Within the camp we have perhaps passed through all the complicated stages of life within a family, a community, and, we may go as far as to say, the world. We have felt deep friendships and equally deep

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misunderstandings; we have wished so eagerly and so sincerely for a deeper understanding of others in this 'family' and in the 'families' in the factories and canneries, and yet have been too often wrapped within ourselves. We have learned that only by opening our minds with deep sincerity can we come into complete understanding with our fellows. . . . As we bowed our heads in silent prayer, the crude surroundings of the little chapel in the tool shed seemed to us aglow with the beauty of His presence among us. Is this not a challenge to the family, to the community, to the world?"

The camp at Brantford was indeed a challenge to out-of-pocket students, rich in Christian ideals. It ran on an all-out cooperative basis, following the time-honored Rochdale principles. Each member made a capital investment of \$10.00 for camp emergencies, and the weekly board was fixed at \$9.00. They pooled their wages, which varied from thirty to eighty cents an hour, so that every one was assured of the same basic, tax-clear minimum — around \$19.00 a week. Travel expenses, coach rate, were also adjusted to an average of \$42.00, so that students coming from more distant schools, like the University of British Columbia would not be penalized more than those coming from the comparatively near-by McGill University and Queens Theological College. •

Although these students had no difficulty finding vacancies, employers were more cautious about hiring

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them than employers had been in similar projects in the United States. This was probably because the plants were smaller and in some cases the owner was also the personnel manager. The students were often asked such blunt questions as, "Are you coming in to 'study the situation'?" or, "What 'cause' are you furthering — Communism?" and even, "You're not a religious fanatic, are you?"

Evidently their answers satisfied employers, for with the generous assistance of the National Employment Service everyone found jobs after a two- or three-day hunt.

And it didn't take long for employers to discover that in this industrial work camp they had a group who were willing to learn, sincere in purpose, and congenial with the regular "hands." One employer, the last to give in and the first to inquire if there were more such workers, told a reporter from the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, interviewing him for a story on the workers in his cannery, "There's something about these young folk that sets them apart. I visited them as a supper guest and speaker one evening recently at 'Basic.' What a name and what a place! They're as modern as they come, with smart playtogs, hair-do's, cosmetics, and clever repartee. They work hard and conscientiously in our cannery all day, too. They know rollicking songs and lively folk dances and come up just as naturally with deep harmonious spirituals."

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The daily schedule at "Basic" crowds the hero bench:

- 5:15 A.M. Rising bell
- 5:45 A.M. Individual worship
- 6:00 A.M. Breakfast
- 6:20 A.M. Bus to town (The airport was 4 miles out.)
- 7:00 A.M.
to On the job
- 4:00 P.M.
- 5:55 P.M. Fag warning bell
- 6:00 P.M. Supper
- 7:30 P.M. Study period: reports on assigned reading,
outside speakers, and/or discussions
- 9:15 P.M. Worship together in chapel
- 10:00 P.M. Lights out (purely theoretical!)

Monday evenings were devoted to economic issues, Wednesdays to Bible reading and interpretation, Thursdays to sociology, and Fridays to shared fun with fellow factory workers at "Basic." The other evenings were "free" for fag duties, such as coping with the oven, the washing machine, the ironing board, the mop and broom. In addition to working out, keeping house, and studying, every member of the camp had to prepare at least one sermon about every two weeks for the nightly and Sunday morning interdenominational services. The titles of some of these sermons reveal the carry-over of work experience into worship: "God in a Workman's Jacket," "A 7-Day Religion," "Shut-down in Salvation," "How Can We Be Christian Wage

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Earners?", "Faith — A Time-and-a-Half Proposition."

This group were particularly inventive of spontaneous and varied methods of worship. They held circle friendship prayers, starlight meditations, campfire hymn-fests, and even a closing camp communion service conducted by a local clergyman and two student-ministers, representing three denominations.

Colorfully describing the strong religious commitment of this group, several of the camp scribes collaborated on a last will and testament for the inheritors of next year's "Basic":

"After a rather lengthy worship service, you will tell the group as you wearily stagger to bed, 'Rest assured, mine will be short tomorrow night.' But cometh the hour for you to lead and, of course, you've got so many things to bring out that 'I'm sure the group won't mind if this service is just a *few* minutes longer than usual! . . .'

"One must be prepared to have a Christian viewpoint in whatever comes up. In other words, nothing is your own. And if you do own anything when you arrive, you won't for long. If it has not disappeared for all time during the summer, it surely will be unearthed at the end of the camp to be given to those 'who are less fortunate'. . . ."

Further comments from this document record the lighter side of camp living: "One must get used to noise on a grand and utterly nonsymphonic scale. In fact,

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if one is not deaf, it would be well to acquire this trait before arriving. . . . Also, at least two months prior to coming, one should train one's self into doing with a maximum of three or four hours' sleep. . . . Stateside students should be prepared to have Canadian tea-brewing experts sometimes make coffee without putting the coffee in the pot. . . .

"Be ready to lose all your outside friends and alienate your rich aunties, for you will have no time for letter writing. As for your personal life, you will have none. Even your most private and delicate telephone conversations, be they short or long distance, from a doting mama or a lonesome boy friend, will have a rapt and enthralled audience as the 'family' take it all in to hash over at bull sessions later on."

Several years ago the city of Brantford was chosen to further the work camp program because it is a center of more than one hundred manufacturing plants. It is also the market town for a surrounding prosperous agricultural section. Although the population is under 50,000, there are about thirty churches in the city, many of which have choirs of distinction. Brantford is, in fact, known throughout Canada as the "City of Choirs."

The factory life of Brantford is varied indeed. Some plants have a closed shop, some a voluntary union, some a company union, and others no union at all. The students found wide discrepancies in wages among dif-

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ferent industries and particularly between the earnings of men and women. A few students joined their fellow workers in the struggle to establish unions.

The student who met his fellow workers eagerly waiting around the plant gates in the early morning to hear him tell what he had learned the night before at "Basic" about how to form a union was, according to the group's opinion, "giving constructive leadership." He was an eye opener to a couple of middle-of-the-road students who got hung up on doubts as to "whether an increased income would help the mental and spiritual needs of the workers."

Similarly the student who faced the temptation of going back on his fellow foundrymen but who chose instead to join them in the union walkout at his plant was applauded by the group at "Basic." When it became known that this student would not be able to return to college if he failed to earn a certain minimum amount during the summer, his fellow campers acted spontaneously and almost unanimously. They voted that he should continue to draw on the wage pool until the strike at the iron foundry was settled.

This group developed an outstanding sense of responsibility for the individual's welfare. One of the girls picked up chicken pox and was quarantined from work for three weeks. Questions were raised across the dinner table and at work benches as the students came face to face with the meaning of pay stoppage for the disabled.

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"Is it right for this to happen in a Christian community? Must the one who is ill also suffer financial stress and worry?" After much debating as to how to act on the problem without the sting of charity or the evil of patronage, the students agreed to set up a medical pool into which every member would pay regularly. It was an efficient scheme as well as a real fulfillment of Christian responsibility not only toward the stricken girl but for all members of the camp community. The medical pool secured them against financial loss through sickness and accident.

Over and over again at the Wednesday evening Bible periods, the precepts of Jesus were examined in the light of these workaday experiences and found applicable. "He did not hesitate to denounce the established order that denied to men the fruits of their labor. . . . Jesus affirmed man's right to food, clothing, and a home and to all the other things that together make up the more abundant life. . . ." So the students worked, thought, and grew to a stirring interpretation of their faith.

During their three months in Brantford, the students took part in the social life of the airport community and attended regularly several of the Brantford churches. Friday nights were devoted to a planned program of skits, singing, and dancing for guests from the factories.

After one such Friday evening, which closed with an under-the-stars prayer circle, a factory girl asked, "Does

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going to church make you feel like I felt at that service?" It turned out that she had never before been inside a church in her entire life!

When asked if she were a Protestant or a Roman Catholic she said, "Sometimes I tell people one thing and sometimes the other, but I don't really know the difference."

The students took her with them the following Sunday morning to an Anglican service, and she was enthralled by the boys' choir which sang as one radiant voice. The next Sunday she joined the students at an evening meeting of the young people of a United Church.

"It was apparent to all of us," said the student who had taken this girl under her wing, "that she had found what she needed in the Protestant church."

Within Canada, the work camp idea has been spreading since 1941. In the years since then, thirty-five week-end, fortnight, and summer-long camps have been held in the provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec. Young people's church groups all over Canada are making requests for work camp programs. Ministers who need assistance in a community development or church rehabilitation are learning that work campers can provide the needed spark and willing hands. Employers and government officials are becoming increasingly interested in work camps and are assisting in the location of projects and living quarters.

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The largest number of projects and the most extensive throughout Canada today, however, are volunteer camps of two weeks' duration sponsored by the Christian Work Camp Fellowship. Young office and professional workers give their vacations and offer their services gratis to some worthy community effort. These short-term campers study, work, worship, play, and perform all their own K.P. duty just as the summer-long campers do. In many communities, the two-week campers are billeted in private homes in the district and eat together in a church.

"That so much can be accomplished in a fortnight is always amazing to me," says Eunice Pyfrom, General Secretary of the Christian Work Camp Fellowship.

"At Lake St. Peter, for instance, twenty-three campers — twelve of them young women and quite unskilled as laborers — helped build and nearly completed a church in two weeks. With a chimney, too, mind you! The men of the community had made the cement foundation before camp opened. In addition, two of these girls conducted a vacation school for about eighteen children five years and under and held it every morning for a week. And there's still more! The volunteer community carpenter who 'bossed' the church building job happened also to be the owner of a summer hotel. When it was learned that two of his waitresses had deserted him, two campers filled in until replacements came."

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This camp held "reading meals" at which one member ate his dinner in advance and then read aloud to the rest. In this way during their two weeks they read most of *The Prophet* and a great deal from *The Life of St. Francis*.

The girls and married couples had an entire house dubbed "The Roost," and the boys bunked in a nearby lumber sleep camp. Everybody, however, ate, worshiped, and romped in "The Roost." Unlike American campers who accent in-between-meal pop and coffee, this crowd went in for lemonade and cocoa. Neighboring farmers and fishermen who came to help on the church often brought a share of their vegetables and their catch of fresh lake bass, which the campers devoured with relish.

In spite of the hazards of putting up walls, roof, and chimney, the two weeks yielded only one injured finger and two severe sunburns from lying on the hot shingles during the "roofing days." The work campers had fun and spiritual stimulation, too. They swam, canoed, listened to the loons on the lake, and held morning and evening meditation and worship during which Anglican and United Church members, one Friend, and one Baptist gave thanks for "the tonic of manual work and fellowship."

To people who ask what work camps are all about, Gerry Hutchinson, General Secretary of the Student Christian Movement of Canada, explains, "So many

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people live in fractions. In the home or among friends, people are expansive and helpful toward others, yet out in society they must struggle against others to keep their own places. In a work camp you have the opportunity to become whole. Your struggle is with your fellow man, not against him.

“Young people listen to the claims of ‘life abundant,’ ‘I am the truth,’ and, ‘the truth shall make you free,’ yet in their experience, the church seems restrictive, untrue to what they have learned as truth in schools and to what is bound up in traditions at home. Work camps are simply the attempts of young men and women to help one another reconcile some of these contradictions. There are few, if any, of our campers who do not feel that they ‘wouldn’t have missed it for the world.’

“The students I had the pleasure of being with at Brantford went away aware that their summer has every chance of being the most important single experience of their university years. We all felt something big had happened to each one of us.”

chapter five

One World on Halsted Street

HIS FACE WAS PAINT-SMUDGED and his arms were dusty with calcimine. He looked like an apprentice house painter trying to make good on his first job. Beside him the woman in soot-stained jeans was stirring turpentine into a tin of paint with far more zeal than skill. Incidental conversation a moment or so before had revealed that he was the Chief Minister of Education of a South American country and she an ex-army nurse who had been with the wounded at Salerno. In the next room two local high school girls, a Nisei optometrist, and a Congregational Christian minister from Maine were plugging rat holes and washing walls.

No, the scene was not a Broadway stage setting for a pathological drama, and none of the characters was suffering from delusions of grandeur. They were just what they claimed to be, and they were cleaning and painting the bedrooms of the Turner home, a run-down tenement

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in Chicago's near-Northside. It was a true vignette on a Saturday morning in spring, and they were volunteer week-end work campers.

They had never met one another until the night before when they had assembled at the Olivet Institute, Chicago Regional Office work camp headquarters of the American Friends Service Committee. The workers had in common neither age, class, religious affiliation, nor race. What had drawn them together was the opportunity to give a fraternal hand to people living in sub-standard houses that had deteriorated still further as a result of neglect by landlords capitalizing on the housing shortage and doing nothing in the way of repairs.

All of the workers asked the questions others before them had asked, "What about the people? What do they feel about opening up their homes? How does the philosophy of working with people rather than for them reach across the understandable doubts and suspicions of a proud and sensitive family?"

The story of what happened in the home of Jewel and Clyde Turner, while by no means typical, is entirely true and takes in characteristic reactions of many a near-Northside family.

1 1 1

"Mam, look what I found in the entry." Young Alexander held up a sheet of mimeographed paper, weather-soiled and stained with the muddy footprints that had passed over it.

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Mrs. Turner looked up from the ironing board. There was always washing or ironing going on at the Turners'. She "did uniforms" for nurses. The swollen veins in her legs were proof of the hours she had stood "doing" many a long day and night. "What's it say, Son, that's got you so shined up?"

"It's got a picture of a paint can and brush and a big 'IF.' It says, 'If you will join them in doing the work and if you need their help and if the owner is willing or you are willing to supply the materials and if you sign this application right away and get on the waiting list, the Friends Volunteer Work Campers will come to your home and help you fix it up.' Mam, what's the 'Friends Volunteer Work Campers'? Why would they want to help us?"

"I'm sure I don't know, Son, but one thing I do know. If it's white folks, it ain't for black folks."

"Well, you're always saying if the landlord don't paint this place, you're going to do it yourself. You're always saying to Pa you can't stand it. Why don't we find out about this, huh? It couldn't be white folks — they never come down here."

"I'd be ashamed for reg'lar painters to come in this place, let alone some people I ain't ever heard of. Anyway, we gonna move an' find us a fine, clean place some day."

"Aw, you're always saying that. You know they ain't no place for us to move to."

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"Hush you' mouth, child." There was no impatience in her voice, just loving weariness. "Run along an' play 'fore you wake you' baby siste' inta fretting."

Alexander stuffed the paper into his pocket as he went out. If he only had a stamp, he'd mail it himself just for the fun of it. But he didn't have even three cents. He went down the steps of the dark, windowless hallway. Outside the door, he kicked an empty can down the alley until he came to the street. Whistling, he walked past the front of the house, stopping to peer in Moe's pawnshop, but the same old dusty guitars and cameras were still there. Nothing ever changed, nothing at all — except maybe the words on the church bulletin board. At the corner he stood watching the white letters forming words as Mr. Jones, the minister, put up the new motto for the week.

Alexander thrust his hands into his pocket and, feeling the forgotten paper, pulled it out. "Reverend" Jones would know. Dodging a taxi and a truck, Alexander dashed across the street. He was convinced that Mr. Jones knew everything, and he very nearly did; at least, he always had an answer for whatever Alexander wanted to know. The minister nodded now as he read the paper.

"I was going to mention this at church on Sunday. If we will all help, it's going to be a big thing for this part of town in more ways than one. Your home is just the kind of place they want to come to, what with your

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pa being a handicapped veteran and your mother a hard-working, God-fearing woman.” He hesitated a moment, looking deeply into the boy’s eyes. “They’re white folks, Son, but they’ve gone a long way with God.”

Jewel was interested when Mr. Jones spoke about the matter at service and later explained it all in more detail to her. She trusted her preacher’s opinion. But Clyde was consumed with rage at the very idea of white folks coming to his house. “They can mock me in the street and humiliate me on the job, but they’ll never get into my home to make a show out of that! I’ll fix up my own place!”

“But yuh can’t, Clyde,” Jewel said softly. “Yuh can’t climb up a ladda’ no mo’.”

“Then we’ll wait till we can get into a government housing project!”

The rent collector, too, scoffed at the idea. “Dogooders, eh? Giving you big ideas?” He laughed. “These church people got their nerve all right.” No, he wouldn’t even ask the real estate office to buy a nickel’s worth of paint. If the Turners wanted to fix up the place themselves, why didn’t they go ahead. Nobody was stopping them, were they?

It was young Alexander who helped break the impasse. “Say, Pa, you’re all wrong about those work campers. You know that vacant lot down Halsted? They’re going to make a playground and put up swings

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and sandboxes and everything for the kids. It'll be great for Ma to take Ruby Mae over, come summertime. I was watching this afternoon, and they asked me to come in and help. They're not like any white folks I ever heard you tell of, Pa."

Clyde remained buried in his paper, and Jewel shook her head in warning at Alexander to say no more.

One Saturday afternoon, Clyde came home late. He shyly waved a sample paint chart under Jewel's nose. "It might work out at that, Honey."

Jewel wept as he told her, "I saw it with my own eyes — the playground Alexander was telling us about. They got it all filled in real neat. Early this morning on my way to the factory I saw them working there, white and black together, putting up the posts for swings. Mr. Jones was with them, and he hollered for me to come on in. There was a lawyer's secretary, a Sunday school teacher from an uptown church, a Y.M. secretary, a couple of students from the University of Chicago, our preacher, and three boys from the neighborhood."

"I've been praying for this, Clyde. It ain't the house so much, it's the bitterness in you. You got to give people a chance, Clyde, when they're willing. We got to go more than half way with white folks if life is gonna be better for Alexander and Ruby Mae than it's been for us. I ain't ever met any myself, but I read 'bout them — white folks that don't have motes in they eyes."

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Proudly Alexander mailed the carefully filled in application that night.

A few days later a project leader from the Friends called on Mrs. Turner. Together they went over the house and estimated the cost of plaster and paint. Jewel said she could have the paint money saved in three weeks and that they could borrow the ladders from her church. The Friend said the workers would bring the necessary brushes and tools.

"How many people can you get to help us, Mrs. Turner?"

"If you come three weeks from Saturday, they'll be me and my sister, Annie. She lives an' works out but that would be her week end off, an' this is her home when she's off. An' Alexander an' one of his Scout friends from junior high. Clyde'll be home 'bout two an' he can scrape the walls he can reach standing an' cut an' paste the wall paper. He got wounded in the war an' there's a misery in his leg."

On Saturday morning three weeks later six work campers and the local hardware dealer arrived at the Turner home. This dealer's business had been increased by the project and, becoming interested, he had volunteered to give time to it every Saturday morning. He came along and gave each group an informal on-the-spot lesson in plastering, painting, papering, and in keeping the brushes and tools in good condition. He donated trowels and scrapers and knocked off 10 per

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cent on the purchase of materials. When he left the Turners that morning he stood in the doorway counting aloud the five whites, the four Negroes, the one Japanese American. "This oughta be in the movies — 'one world' right on Halsted Street."

The woman downstairs, overcome by curiosity and the sound of merriment and activity, came up. Annie, who was sloshing green paint on the kitchen walls, stuck a scraper into her hand. "Gal, you come to the wrong place to gossip today. You stick 'round here, you gotta work." The woman went to work in the bedroom beside the ex-army nurse, and anyone listening to them would have thought they were old friends discussing what women the world over find fascinating talk.

Around noon the work campers went out to lunch at the church. Jewel would have been glad to prepare lunch and had offered to, but the project leader had explained on his first visit that the campers would bring their own. "This is to save your time in cooking for so many, so that you can work right along with us. And it protects the feelings of other householders who would also like to offer lunch but just couldn't afford to do so."

Jewel had been impressed with this and in reporting the visit to Clyde had said, "I just know folks who think that long about other folks' feelings ain't setting out to do us no hurt inside or out. Seems to me like these people know what they're up to."

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After eight hours of work the walls of the kitchen shone with fresh apple green paint, and the bedrooms had bright new paper on the walls. The Turners had on their faces the largest smiles of their lives. Even Ruby Mae, catching the spirit of fun all around, gurgled and dimpled.

"Are all the people as nice as this bunch, or are we just lucky?" Clyde asked the South American. He said he didn't know, but he suspected next week's crop would be even better.

The following week end an entirely different group of campers appeared. They included an ex-G.I. with whom Clyde exchanged experiences as they cut and pasted the paper for the parlor and dining room walls. Clyde came to the conclusion it hadn't been luck that first week. "All campers are fine people."

The house was completely finished about 4:30 P.M. that second week end. Jewel invited the group to sit around the kitchen table to drink coffee and eat a huge cake Annie had baked and brought over at the suggestion of her interested white employer.

New ruffled curtains hung in the kitchen. The coal range shone from many polishings, and the old wooden ice box glistened in a coat of cream paint young Alexander and Clyde had given it during the week. Jewel was full of plans for drapes for the newly decorated parlor. "It'll take a month or so to save up for 'em, but we're sure going to have 'em."

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When the rent collector came in on this party of merry workers, he accepted the invitation to "sit in." Later he made a tour of inspection with Clyde and the ex-G.I. He was so impressed he was nearly speechless. He gave Clyde the weekly rent receipt and turned back a ten-dollar bill. "My share in the paint," he said gruffly. "You folks sure got something new in church work. Something a guy like me can understand."

Jewel's eyes grew big with planning for a Monday morning excursion to the remnant store. She wouldn't have to wait a month now for her parlor drapes.



A Chicago week-end work camp starts on Friday at 5 P.M. The volunteers are put to work immediately preparing their own supper, setting the table, and making up the army cots and bunks in the rooms designated as men's and women's dormitories. They bring their own sheets, pillow slips, towels, and soap. Around the table at the first evening meal, everyone introduces himself, telling his name, where he comes from, how he heard of the project, and why he's there. Dishes are washed and then an outside speaker gives a short talk on the social, economic, and religious background of the district in which they are to work. Assignments are then made, usually five to six campers to one home.

The next morning the rising bell is heard at 6 A.M. Breakfast is served at 6:30, followed by a period of unprogrammed worship with spontaneous contributions

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by members as the Spirit moves them. Some go to work on the dishes while others prepare the lunch bags. The campers are all ready to leave for the project about 8:15 A.M.

That night the troupe of weary, dirty campers come back to Olivet about 6 P.M., take showers, and enjoy, with the appetite of laborers, a piping hot dinner. There may be a discussion led by some Chicago speaker of note or an evening of folk dancing.

The next morning the volunteers have breakfast together and get ready to visit some one of the varied neighborhood churches. It's a heart-warming experience for both campers and families when they run across each other again, worshiping together in the same church. Many a sally is passed on the church steps as the dressed-up friends reminisce. "You sure look different from yesterday when you had paint all over your nose."

There are usually about twelve to fifteen campers each week end. When the quota of persons able to participate is exceeded, future week-end schedules are filled with the overflow. Workers are recruited through ministers, Y secretaries, college professors, and organizational heads who explain details of the program. Experience, however, has shown that the campers themselves are the best recruiters, just as the families worked with are the best promoters of the program throughout their own neighborhood.

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In less than one year in the near-Northside area, twenty-five families have been aided. Work started in about fifteen other homes was finished by the families themselves. They became so enthusiastic they just couldn't wait for the second week end! A couple of playgrounds have been set up on vacant lots, and neighborhood recreational buildings have had badly needed repairs and paint jobs.

For many members of this community — whose main contacts with white people have been as servants, laborers, or clients of social agencies — a friendly and individual relationship with a white person is a startling new experience. The greatest by-product of home fixing for the tenants has come from the realization that there are a large number of white people of all ages and from many walks of life who are sincerely interested in the welfare of their Negro neighbors.

There seems also to be a real question as to what ultimately adds up to the greatest good — the results of home beautification on the tenants or the effect of the experience on the work campers. This question of the two-way reward was discussed at noontime as the work campers from the first Saturday at the Turner home joined with similar groups working with other families. They met in the basement of Mr. Jones' church to eat their lunches, to consult one another on the progress of their work, and to exchange impressions gained from their experiences.

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The minister from Maine was blunt and emphatic. "My four hours' work this morning has given me more insight than the four-day interracial conference that brought me to Chicago. There is danger in becoming isolated behind ivory towers in committee rooms, churches, and schools and in being so surrounded with blessings that we fail to be sensitive to the needs of our fellow men. 'It *is* more blessed to give than to receive,' and I say this in wonder and humility as one who is discovering the true meaning of the Lord's words."

"It is for me also a most personal discovery." The South American educator picked up the minister's thought. "Yes, we are transforming the worn-out, sad, and unexpressive house of the Turners into a nicer, cozier home. Such a fine family deserves this most certainly. But the job that is being done on us is amazing. We are a little bit closer to God. We have been good people for a little bit of our lives."

As one theological seminary student phrased his experience at evaluation time Saturday night, "You can't stop neighborliness when it gets started on a down-to-earth level. The hardware man and the rent collector, shrewd and wary as they might ordinarily be, had to get in on this, too, because it was so concrete, so right. And although Jewel said, 'This is the biggest favor I've ever had done for me,' the words might have been mine as well, because helping her and Clyde was a

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big favor for me. I'm thankful for a day of *living* . . . for having a job where you could see you were accomplishing something on the house and in the hearts of everybody there. This is a project I'm going to carry with me into the ministry in the industrial New England town where I hope to serve."

The meaning of it all is well illustrated in the awakening that came to Harold, who was one of the workers who spent the second week end at the Turners. He came to Olivet because this seemed a safe and easy way to find out how the other half lived. When he arrived on Friday night Harold was full of unspoken thoughts, such as, "Why should white people do their dirty work for them? . . . If they really wanted their houses fixed, they'd do it themselves; just lazy, that's all. . . . I bet that in a couple of months the places that get fixed up will be just as dirty as they were to begin with. . . ."

He became acutely uncomfortable during the orientation period Friday night when he discovered that none of his inner thoughts was original. Point by point, speakers and questioners frankly discussed all the negative ideas he had been harboring. The next day at the Turners he saw how the freshly painted kitchen had been the incentive for new curtains, a shining stove, and a revived ice box.

Meeting Mr. and Mrs. Turner as individuals and taking in their home situation, he realized that alone it

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would have taken weeks of drudgery and turmoil in the little tenement to accomplish what many pairs of willing hands had done easily in two week ends. Seeing the alley entrance, the sagging, paint-shy exterior, and the bleak location of the tenement block over a pawnshop, a delicatessen, and a poolroom, Harold had readily confessed to himself that, had he been forced to live there, he'd never have been tempted to fix up the interior.

Although the minimum charge for the volunteers is two dollars, which covers their room and five meals, Harold found himself making an additional contribution for the Brush Fund. "I'm sure that I can go on with whatever I find at hand to do with more unselfishness and more happiness. I never knew I had so much. It was a better lesson for me than a Sunday sermon."

chapter six

Everyone His Neighbor

*A*REN'T YOU WHITE?" THE laboratory technician looked sharply at the blond boy who had come to give a blood transfusion to the Negro child on the stretcher.

"What difference does it make?"

It made a lot of difference to the Aryan technician, and he said so . . .

1 1 1

"You can't be colored?" The woman leaned out of the sleek convertible to ask the white girl tying the Negro child's shoelace on the sidewalk.

"I'm not," the girl said pleasantly.

"Then you must be wonderfully crazy." The woman got out of the car. "Shake my hand, my dear, and tell me all about it . . ."

1 1 1

"Are you passing?" asked a Negro boy looking up curiously at the white men on the ladders repairing the

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community center roof. "I saw you people yesterday swimming with some black boys, but you don't live in colored town."

"No, we're white."

The boy stood uncertainly. "Naw," he said finally. "You can't be white, 'cause white folks would git mad at that . . ."

1 1 1

"Is she really white?" the Negro mother whispered to the colored girl. She had watched the two girls, one Negro and one obviously white, every morning as they came through colored town to collect the children and shepherd them safely across the streets to the playground.

"Yes, she's white."

"Lord A'mighty! Times must be changin' sure 'nough. Curley, that's my little boy down yonde', he told me there's white and black boys workin' down at the old U.S.O. buildin', and they call theirselves brothers. And I say to him, 'Curley, what kinda talk is that?' And he say, 'Ever'body is brothers this summer in Phoebus, and that's a fac', Mam.' "

1 1 1

Varied indeed were the reactions of the community to the presence of the interracial work campers in Phoebus, Virginia. The technician, the club woman, the child, and the mother were representative of a wide range of attitudes.

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Two Negro and seven white college girls and teachers from Massachusetts to Tennessee, three white and three Negro college and professional men from Pennsylvania to Texas came to Phoebus under the auspices of the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen and the American Friends Service Committee. They lived cooperatively on the campus of Hampton Institute, a Negro college, and worked together on behalf of the Negro community at near-by Phoebus.

The pattern of this work camp required the utmost in group unity and dedication. The campers had to stick together or defeat their purpose — they were a demonstration to the town and a witness to one another that all are brothers and differences can be bridged by understanding. They had to present a united front of good will and moral courage. They had to be a group that didn't lose their tempers nor sell one another short, no matter what happened.

Here, too, due to the mores of the town, a pattern of activity was adopted that other work camps take pride in eliminating — “girls' work” and “boys' work.” For white girls to have been seen working side by side with Negro boys at manual labor would have blinded both the Negro and white onlookers to the purpose of the camp. The girls, therefore, confined their work to the summer playground at Phoebus and the year-round playground at Hampton. The boys worked on the remodeling of the community center in Phoebus.

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One night a number of the girls wanted to go to see *The Yearling* playing at one of the theaters in town. When it was brought home to them that the Negro campers would not be allowed to enter this theater, the white girls lost interest in going. In planning leisure hours for the group, they accepted only those invitations of white and Negro community residents where all the campers would be welcome. They went to the churches that were open to them as a group — the Negro churches and the Jewish synagogue. They swam only where the whole crowd was welcome — Bayshore Beach for Negroes and the Hampton Institute pool.

Soon after arriving, Aubrey Sally, Dick Shepard, and Ed Bittenbender went downtown one evening to get an ice cream sundae. Dick, a Negro, sat between the two white fellows at the soda fountain. There seemed to be some confusion among the waitresses. One of them came up finally and spoke to Aubrey and Ed, "You oughta know we can't serve him here."

Upon asking for an explanation, she shrugged, "Negroes can buy inside but they have to eat outside."

The three of them bought their sundaes and went over to the church across the street. They sat down on the church steps and ate their ice cream together. After that experience, the campers did not attempt to eat in restaurants or go to drugstores for cokes and sodas.

But they did not lack for fun and frolic. They attended a watermelon party as guests of the Hampton

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faculty and went in "Feebee, the Friendly Ford" — a panel truck loaned by the Friends — to tour Yorktown, Williamsburg, and the Mariners' Museum. They took deep-sea fishing trips off Newport News and Norfolk and had many an evening of porch ping-pong and folk dancing with the campus students.

"I learned how crippled a Negro's life can be," said Josephine Stewart, a biology instructor at Radford College, Virginia. "I had lived in segregation all my life — on the comfortable side, that is, and was quite untroubled by it until I went away to college. Now I know from this firsthand encounter how it feels to live in segregation on the wrong side. Off campus a Negro professor with a best-seller to his credit and a Ph.D. after his name is strictly back seat fare on any bus, treated with less dignity than a drunken white passenger."

"I was amazed," said Bob Abrams, a Pennsylvania Negro student, "to find such a strong nucleus in this community, which must also exist in most communities, North and South, that needs only courageous leadership to make it vocal in attacking problems of Negro-white division."

All the work campers came to Phoebus out of a conviction, fostered by religious and social education, that actions speak louder than words. The group included young people of Southern Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian U.S., Episcopal, and Quaker faiths. Although

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they made a practice of attending as a group some Negro church or the synagogue each Sabbath, a few of the white members also attended the young people's meetings at the church of their own communion. Meditation and prayer were part of each day's work experience and fortified the young people for a task that challenged at every step all their Christian faith and resources. They came not only with a wide range of religious commitments, but also from varied professional backgrounds.

The local committee was composed of a Baptist minister (Negro), the president of Hampton Institute (white), a professor of theology at Hampton Institute (white), the mayor of Phoebus (white), and five other Negro and white citizens. Some members of this committee met with the campers on the night of their arrival to welcome and assist them in orientation.

Mrs. Martin White, a graduate of Vassar and wife of the camp director, said, "We closed a profitable and pleasant photography business in Texas to come here. Marty specialized in children's portraits and was really marvelous at it. But more and more we realized that if the trusting faces of the children we recorded were not to be betrayed, we had to do something about the confused conditions of the world in which they and our own child would grow up. We shopped around for a place to begin. It seemed a good idea to start on some short-term program such as a church-sponsored summer work

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camp. We heard about the plans for Phoebus. It sounded made to order for our testing ground, and we were accepted by the Friends."

Aubrey Sally from Durham, North Carolina, a student at Yale Divinity School, heard of the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen's plans for an interracial work camp at Phoebus. "I volunteered because a minister in the South, my probable area of work, ought to have just such a down-to-earth experience if he is to take a Christian stand on the major issues he will have to face. And even if I end up in a pastorate in the North, I'm not unaware that I'll have to face the same problems there. The camp was a great devotional exercise."

Although the spiritual demands were greater, living conditions were quite deluxe compared with some other work camps. The campers lived in the attractive college dormitories of Hampton, cooked and ate their meals in the well equipped home economics laboratory and demonstration dining room. Nor was the physical work so taxing as in many other camps. A rickety store building that had once served as a U.S.O. for Negro servicemen was completely remodeled into a recreation center for the Negro youth of Phoebus. The boys partially tore down the old store structure and then rebuilt it under the supervision of a volunteer carpenter who was also a student at Hampton Institute. As many as fifteen men from the community participated on the outside paint job during the last week.

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The summer playground in Phoebus was weeded by the girls and fixed up for the children's use. At Hampton a few of the girls assisted the permanent playground staff in outdoor and indoor activities. The work at both play centers consisted of games, devotions, art crafts, beach trips, and guided tours of the telephone company and college dairy — for Negro youngsters from the ages of two to twenty.

Puppet shows and horseshoe tournaments were held by the older children for the entertainment of their parents and relatives. Empty gallon-sized ice cream cartons were rounded up from restaurants, and the children turned them into colorful take-home waste-paper baskets. Nearly everyone at both playgrounds made something for exhibition in a downtown drugstore window. This appeared for a week and attracted the attention of the public, bringing many curious visitors to the project.

A random week at Phoebus included such visitors and speakers as the daughter of a Negro doctor, a Jewish rabbi, a Negro chaplain from Ft. Eustis, and two visiting child guidance workers from Columbia University. A far-reaching discussion took place at the home of Saunders Redding, faculty member and author of *No Day of Triumph*. He believed quite firmly that the work camp had "compromised" by living on campus, with its part-white, part-Negro faculty which the town had already learned to accept.

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Other activities during that same period included movies at Hampton Institute, worship at the Zion Baptist Church, and an evening at the home of Hampton's president for talk and dessert. But the event that overshadowed all others that particular week was the all-day visit of six of the Phoebus campers to another interracial work camp being held by the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen in Tyrrell County, North Carolina.

At this work camp ten Negro and white young people were living in the farm home of S. P. Dean, a Negro agricultural teacher and president of the Tyrrell Credit Union. During the second week of the camp, Mr. Dean was visited by the mayor of the town who told him that he had better get the white people out of his house. This was quite different from what had happened at Phoebus. There the mayor had issued an invitation to the sponsors to send in their work camp and had visited the project several times. He never quite got over the fact that these young people were not only "doing all that work for nothing but even paying their own transportation, camp fees, and room and board."

The directors of the Tyrrell work camp lost not a moment before calling on the mayor in Columbia to try to make clear to him the purpose of the camp. The mayor said repeatedly that he himself did not disapprove but that "certain people" did. The directors politely offered to go and talk it all over with these

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"certain people," but their names were never made known.

Several times the group were on the point of leaving because of the pressure on the Deans from the mayor to "get those white folks out of here." There was, however, an equal amount of interest from other members of the community, both Negro and white, who urged them to "stay and finish the work."

Two days after the visit of the Phoebus group, the Tyrrell workers were hunted out one night by a mob of about two hundred white men. The campers, warned of their coming, scattered and hid themselves on the farm grounds. They waited several hours in hiding until the wrought-up crowd had been dispersed by the police. No one was harmed, and no attempt was made by the mob to destroy the work that the campers were doing at the farm school buildings and on the Credit Union office in town.

The police chief and sheriff found safe places for the campers to spend the rest of that night, exacting promises from all of them that they would "get out of town tomorrow." This they did quietly, leaving behind the unfinished office building and a hubbub of indignation. The press showed up and gave the story sensational and far from honest treatment.

A waitress in a white café in Columbia said to a minister pumping her as to what she had thought of the campers, "Folks said some white students were helping

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the colored folks. . . . Do you know, it didn't look like they were doing anything so bad."

Other papers picked up the story and it made front pages in a number of cities. In spite of mutilation by the press, the Christian purpose of the campers somehow must have shone through, for many favorable reactions came from unexpected quarters. In among the cries of "communism" and "rabble-rousing" that reached the offices of the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen came this letter of praise. A white woman in South Carolina wrote, "I didn't know a group like yours existed anywhere. It is Christianity coming to life again, lived and not merely preached."

When Mr. Dean reported on the unhappy night to an official Credit Union Committee, he broke down and sobbed, "That was the most Christian group I ever saw. They worked and they prayed. Every morning it was — heads bowed — and they lived that way, all day and every day."

When the Phoebus group heard what had happened in Tyrrell, discussion raged. The question of the hour became, "Is this failure a triumph?" Some Phoebus campers felt that the Tyrrell campers had achieved more than they had. This opinion grew when news came from Tyrrell that several men of the county had gone to Mr. Dean and offered their services to finish the Credit Union office building as a testimony to their belief in the sincerity of the work campers.

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At this time a welfare worker in Hampton entered helpfully in the group's discussions. She had previously shared her observations of public opinion and reactions to the camp, gleaned from white and Negro citizens of Phoebus and Hampton. "At first," she told them, "white opinion was markedly critical and skeptical, especially before you arrived. During the first weeks of your stay, nobody had anything to say one way or the other. Now I would say the reaction is definitely favorable."

One of the campers testified, "I'm ashamed that while I was welcome at any Negro church we chose to enter, my Negro friends would not have been welcome at the church of my denomination in town. I am determined to work within my group in college for the breakdown of this division. It's worth making a career of, and it's for me. I'd like to become one of my denomination's pioneer race relation missionaries."

Several white and Negro citizens asked, "What shall we do about our problems after you young people go?" This type of question reflected the general attitude of members of the community in going on with further work in breaking down segregation.

As Marty White saw it, "The carry-over will probably rest on the already overburdened shoulders of the Reverend J. Dett Marshburn, the Negro minister of the Zion Baptist Church who sparks the whole community with his courage and leadership. He was largely respon-

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sible for initiating the project at Phoebus. He was our guide, our warmest friend, and our constant inspiration."

The Negro community reflected not much beyond a vocal and a very deep appreciation for the work done with the children and the building of an attractive recreation center. Perhaps this is as much reaction as could be expected, for as Mr. Marshburn pointed out at the farewell banquet his church gave the workers, "You have brought a great and different experience in the lives of the people of the two towns, an experience we shall all need time to understand and courage to live up to."

When Josephine Stewart was asked several months after the close of the project what she thought it had accomplished and what it now meant to her, she wrote with as much glow as if she had left camp only an hour before.

"First, we all know from J. Dett Marshburn and Marty White, who visited him a while back, that the building is being used nightly by hundreds of young people every week. Second, we dare to hope that many of the children in those two communities will remember that we love them and that this will help to keep them from becoming embittered by experiences which they will certainly meet later in life. Is that a little, or is that a lot? I don't really know.

"To me the work camp brought a deeper love for

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God and a stronger dedication to his will for my life; a very real and meaningful experience of brotherhood that never could have come through reading, discussion, or even casual acquaintances; a better insight into the meaning of work and of its effectiveness as a medium for speaking to people; a broader understanding of human nature, of how deep-seated emotions and prejudices can be eradicated by experience only, making social progress a slow thing. I feel that this was probably the most meaningful eight weeks I have ever lived, and that is why I am so enthusiastic about work camps!"

To young Mr. and Mrs. Martin White the experience paid off in the rich dividend of discovery. "Living together in true friendship brings complete forgetfulness of color. It isn't 'being nice to the other race' that's important, but becoming oblivious of race. It was Bob Abrams who first worded this idea, and its truth was recognized by all of us. We may have all started out that summer as representatives of one race or the other, but it was knowing one another as individuals, not self-conscious tolerance, that brought about our unity and brotherhood."

Today the Whites are in what Marty calls, with a chuckle, "a chronic work camp situation." They are directors of the year-round intern-in-industry program of the Friends in Philadelphia.

chapter seven

Crossing the Tracks

*J*ACK, I'VE BEEN WANTING TO show you this." Judge Fred Joy picked up two files, one considerably thinner than the other. "Look at the delinquent cases pending this time last July and look at these on the docket now."

"Do you seriously think it's because of our work?"

"I'm sure of it."

Jack Kough was sitting in the judge's office in the county courthouse of a small Kansas town to which he and his wife, Arlene, had come just one year ago. Unconsciously his eyes strayed to the map on the wall beside the judge's desk; it showed a well laid out town. He had come to know it well. The attractive main street was lined with prosperous, modern shops and clean-looking, two- and three-story business buildings. Scattered throughout the town were a proportionate number of apartments and cottages where office and factory workers from the machine shops, the flour mills, and

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grain elevators lived. The town also had its share of imposing houses set on landscaped lawns.

But out of all proportion to these sections was an area of blight across the railroad tracks where the houses huddled and sagged. Farther beyond the tracks, in a sort of no-man's land between the ending of the bus line and the beginning of the wheat fields, were a scattering of shacks and a trailer camp.

"That's where they come from." The judge pointed to the red circle that enclosed most of this area called "Town's End." "That's where every agency in this city ought to be working. But the truth is that until you came, nobody seemed to care. And I don't need to tell you these children aren't to blame for the conditions in their community. And you can't entirely blame the parents either, for they were reared much the same way, maybe back several generations. They know they're set apart from the rest of the town. They know they're different somehow; they feel it in the schools, whenever they venture outside that particular area. But they don't know what to do about it, and there had never been anyone willing to show them — until you and your wife came. As far as I'm concerned you've proved something pretty vital not only to this community but to others like it in other parts of the country."

Jack and Arlene Kough, sponsored by The Brethren Service Commission of the Church of the Brethren, had

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come to give two years of voluntary service in Town's End. They hoped to build or stimulate the existing agencies of the city into building a recreation center to give the children of that neglected area a chance.

Several members of the community saw the mission of the Koughs as a "needless intrusion," a "duplication of effort," an "unfortunate competition." These people pointed to the Y.W.C.A., the Y.M.C.A., the Salvation Army, the Boy and Girl Scouts, the Methodist and the Presbyterian churches, all carrying on active club and fellowship programs for young people throughout the town. Several of the agencies were hostile to the whole idea and said so. But the sad drama that was enacted daily in the county courthouse showed that a job had yet to be done in Town's End.

In the whole of that area there was no playground nor ball field. The tennis courts, the swimming pool, the parks, the well equipped buildings of the social agencies and churches were located at a distance. But more important, they were "across the tracks," a social barrier that made them practically nonexistent to the inferiority-ridden children. When later some of the Town's End boys and girls entered the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. for the first time, they did so aggressively, fully expecting to be "thrown out of the joint." Most of them had lived in the town all their lives but had never heard of the Y.M.C.A. or the Y.W.C.A. in terms that meant "This is for you."

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No matter how jealous of their own interests some of the community members and agencies might have been, none of them could accuse Jack and Arlene Kough personally of setting out to make and perpetuate a cozy berth for themselves. They were work campers on an individual scale, asking only to serve and receiving from the Church of the Brethren for their work only actual living costs plus \$20.00 a month.

They were not sent to promote their own church. They were not sent to try to divert the town's money from the existing agencies in order to establish something new. They were explorers in service, catalysts in a static situation, the kind of pioneers in cooperation that are needed in practically every community in America today. If they could succeed in getting the already existing agencies of the town to "pull together" and produce a program for Town's End, their church would consider that the "Kough mission" had been accomplished.

No, it was not an easy task. Jack and Arlene entered the town without an official welcome from the social agencies, without a place to live, without a car, without a center from which to operate. Mrs. Maybelle S. Cooley — the Probation Officer for the county, who had first interested the Church of the Brethren in the possibilities of such a "missionary job" — opened her home to Jack and Arlene. The inspiration and help of Mrs. Cooley were instrumental in many of the results

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that followed. The Koughs lived with Mrs. Cooley's family for nearly six weeks before they found an apartment. While house hunting, they also explored the city for a place in which to go to work.

The only vacant building in Town's End was the voting center, a makeshift building that only an idealistic missionary couple like the Koughs could see had "possibilities." The city management gave it to them rent free, and here the Koughs set up an outdoor and indoor play and crafts center. This center operated from May into November, when the cold weather put an end to the use of this building for it had no heating facilities.

By that time, however, some of the citizens and a few of the agencies were alive to the situation and extended a welcoming hand. And the boys and girls in Town's End who had responded so eagerly to Jack and Arlene's personal outreach were now able to overcome their fear of going outside their own territory. Gladly many of them followed Jack and his program when it moved, by invitation, into the nearest strategic building — the Y.M.C.A. — a place into which they probably would never have ventured without the long months of contact with Jack and Arlene that had preceded this step.

Jack's activities in the town made his days and nights a jigsaw puzzle of cooperation. He fitted himself into all the odd pieces of coordinating work the community needed done. He and Arlene walked many a weary mile

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through dust and mud visiting in the homes of Town's End, compiling a badly needed social survey of the whole area. Their reception ranged all the way from the too eager talk of those used to being slighted, to the barking of dogs, unchecked by suspicious householders who yelled through firmly closed doors, "We don't want to buy *anything!*"

Jack organized ball teams to bring his boys into friendly competition with teams in other sections of the town. His heart ached as he noted the physical and mental differences between the intown boys and his boys of the same age. The intown boys were inches taller and had more endurance and quicker reactions in the baseball and basketball contests.

To Jack and Arlene, Judge Joy and Mrs. Cooley turned over several boys and girls on probation instead of committing them to reform school. Arlene tutored girls who were falling behind in schoolwork, mostly due to having no place to study at home, no encouragement to complete assignments. Through their church contacts in the town, the Koughs interested doctors and businessmen into giving services and money for needed surgery and hospitalization for several very sick children.

Jack and Arlene helped the Kiwanis Club run their annual Christmas party for the underprivileged children of the town. Jack also assisted in the drive for funds for the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis. He

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sometimes spoke four and five times a week at businessmen's luncheons and church and school and club meetings.

The Judge's comments about the falling off of delinquency give some indication of the effect the Koughs were having on the boys and girls. The backgrounds and the home life of most of the children they dealt with would make sorry reading. In one of the shacks the Koughs found a fourteen-year-old boy who had never had a bed. He was sleeping on two wooden horses mounted with three four-by-six planks padded with a layer of newspapers and a couple of worn blankets. In another family they found a girl whose mother's outlook was so warped that she wanted her fifteen-year-old daughter to "get pregnant so someone will have to marry her and she'll get out of here."

Many of the children had homes from which the Koughs wished they could rescue them. Such "homes" were simply shelters from the dark and places to eat — there was nothing else there, neither comfort nor love. The children spent every minute they could away from such homes, loafing in the streets with others like themselves who wished to escape from similar conditions.

The boys and girls of Town's End were lonely, restless, frustrated, and outside of all contact with the religious and social life of the city. They went to school only to meet with more isolation and failure. From their ranks came the chronic truants and pupils who left

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school as soon as the law allowed. Over and over again they ran away from home and school only to be brought back, whipped by their parents and threatened by the authorities. They stole from downtown shops and from one another. They took dangerous and costly joy rides in stolen cars. By the time they were sixteen or seventeen they knew most of the evils of life and all too little of the good things.

One of the eighteen-year-old boys with whom Jack had worked briefly ran away from town in despair and wrote Jack about it in the following pitiful letter:

“Hi Jack how are you making it Jack fine I hope. How is your club fine I know it would be a fine club after you got it started good Jack I have one more week of boot camp left. Jack you know how come I left without good-by and got in the Marines well it was because I was in too much trouble and the cops were coming to my house every time any time anything went on they said I done it and so when I got back maybe they will forget my name and I can start all over again Jack I want to.

“Well Jack I can’t think of anything to write fore it is just the same old thing over and over again you know how it is don’t you Jack and you know how it is when you don’t get any mail at mail call it was worse during the war I bet but you sure like to get a letter Jack. Tell Judge Joy I said that I will send him soon the \$7.00 I owe him and tell him I said hello will you. So long.”

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By the spring of their second year of service, Jack and Arlene had raised enough money to purchase a parcel of lots for a playground in Town's End. This was weeded and graded at city expense.

Jack and Arlene then went on a tour through Kansas, Texas, Colorado, and California, speaking in churches and colleges, recruiting young people for a combination summer work camp to build the playground and to take part in a Peace Institute. Fifty young people signed up and began to arrive on June 13. They lived in Camp Webster, several miles out of town. Two cars carried the workers back and forth in relays to the site of the playground for Town's End.

This was an unusual group with an age range from fourteen to thirty—high school and college students, teachers and office workers. Out of their worship periods, conducted in turn by each member, came such innovations as "Prayer Vigils" and "Songspirations." Their entertainments were always original and often socially significant.

One night, for instance, a group of them dreamed up an "auction for relief." Every one of the campers brought one of his own possessions. Jack Kough and Keith Huffaker acted as auctioneers and sold to the highest bidder such items as sunglasses, shirts, jewelry, Kleenex, and belts. It was a hilarious evening and everyone was simply bowled over when the auctioneers announced a "take" of \$170.00! This the work campers

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enthusiastically voted to donate to the Brethren Overseas Relief program.

Besides being an eternally hungry horde at the table, between meals the campers drank rivers of pop and ate miles of "dump cookies." These cookies were a specialty of the camp cook whose secret formula was said, by those who claimed to be in the know, to include "left-over apple pie, tired prunes, 'morning after' popcorn, mashed potatoes, and wilted pancakes." Every nickel for pop was "taxed a nickel for Poland," another camp scheme. All the Sunday morning Camp Webster church offerings also went into the Relief-for-Poland Fund. At the close of the camp on July 15 this fund amounted to \$279.52.

The work campers built a ball diamond and basketball, volley ball, and horseshoe courts; put up swings; and constructed a sand pile in the Town's End playground. They poured concrete for the shuffleboard court, painted in the lines and figures, and finally enclosed the whole with a wire fence.

A few of the older campers completed the house-to-house survey of families in Town's End that Jack and Arlene had started. The campers broke down the information, assembled it under several headings, and turned over the results to various churches and agencies for their use in extending service to the area. For instance, those families giving a church preference but confessing they "didn't ever go" were listed and turned over to

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pastors for contact. Homes in which neglected bed-ridden patients were found were listed and given to the proper authorities for attention.

All this took these fifty willing and hard workers about two weeks and included all the fun and frolic that could possibly be dreamed up by such a gang. There was the usual outbreak of camp romances, sleep walking, bull sessions, birthday parties, mislaid diaries, snake scares, and mosquito bites.

The second two weeks were devoted to a Peace Institute with leaders from the Church of the Brethren pastorates and colleges teaching morning and afternoon classes in foreign affairs, international relations, and Bible interpretation. Ed Crill, regional peace consultant for the Church of the Brethren, one of the historic peace churches, was co-director of Camp Webster with the Koughs. Ed also had complete charge of the Peace Institute plan and program.

During the Peace Institute five of the college students were moved to commit themselves to giving a year of their lives to try to further the cause of peace in the world. With equal spontaneity, the rest of the campers volunteered to help support these five with monthly contributions from their allowances and earnings. This project became the first of several Peace Caravans of the Brethren.

During a few months of this year of service, these five young people toured the wheat belt and were responsible

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for carload after carload of wheat that went to Europe through the channels of Church World Service. Their main project, however, was to bring educational peace programs to local Brethren churches.

All this was but a by-product of the original mission of two young people to a small Kansas town! Because of the playground—the work campers; because of the work campers—the Peace Institute; because of the Peace Institute—you could go on forever, following the carloads of wheat to the tables of the hungry in Europe or the far-reaching effects of peace education on young people in many churches.

But what happened to the town itself? When the Koughs left they turned over the playground to the Y.M.C.A. to run, with the stipulation that if this agency could not carry on the work for any reason, it would be given to another. Jack now makes periodic visits to check up on activities.

The Salvation Army put up a \$10,000 community center in Town's End, which includes quarters for Boy and Girl Scout troops, a chapel, and indoor recreation facilities for adults as well as children.

Today Jack Kough is serving under the Brethren Service Commission in the work camp program of the Western Regional Council of the Church of the Brethren. But he still thinks a great missionary job could be done by his and other denominations through small teams of "trouble shooters" who would go out as

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volunteers, as he and Arlene did, into some communities that are neglecting the potentialities of their churches and social agencies and "stir things up."

The name of the town has been withheld deliberately out of consciousness that its situation is not unique. Across America today there are too many towns like this one where the schools, churches, and social agencies sleep in serene traditional service, unawake to the needs for outreach "across the tracks." In this Kansas town experiment the Church of the Brethren has opened ground in a new field—the field of cooperation for a more Christian community and a more Christian nation.

chapter eight

Summer on Wheels

YOU HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE five o'clock, Jim?" There was a faint note of anxiety in young Mrs. Marshall's voice.

The oldest of the ranch hands sitting with the family at the laden table shook his head. "No, ma'am. We been in Field Three and he ain't been round there."

"It's not like Todd to ignore the dinner gong," Mrs. Marshall explained to their guest, George Reid. "What do you think, Wallace?" she appealed to her husband. "The food's getting cold, and I haven't seen him for over an hour."

Before Mr. Marshall could answer, a screen door banged, and young Todd streaked into the ranch dining room, slid into his seat, bowed his head, and raced through grace.

George Reid, though young, was not without a sensitivity of observation that would serve him well in the career in writing for which he was preparing himself in

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college. He noted the looks exchanged by Mr. and Mrs. Marshall, the looks of parents let down by their child at a critical moment. Silently George applauded Mrs. Marshall, for there was no rebuke given then, no scene made to save her pride at the child's expense by taxing him with his conduct or making embarrassing explanations to the guest that "Todd never acted this way before." George knew it would be talked over with the child later and alone.

As Mrs. Marshall quietly began serving, she introduced George, reminding Todd that this was the special caravan guest they had been looking forward to meeting. "George is going to be with us a week, Son."

The ten-year-old Todd sat through the introduction with the poise of a patient diplomat to whom it was all old stuff and not so weighty as what he had on his mind. The minute the amenities were over, the question exploded out of the boy, "Where's the camels?"

Todd had been looking in all the corrals for the camels he had expected would come with George's caravan! When Mrs. Marshall undertook to explain that the dictionary said a caravan was "a company traveling together," George knew from the boy's face that he'd have to make up somehow for having no camel. And before the week was over he did make it up to Todd.

To many people, however, and especially to youngsters like Todd, the word "caravan" does bring up vi-

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sions of camels, deserts, and tents. In terms in which a bishop of the then Methodist Episcopal Church South dreamed up the first caravan in 1939, it is really a work camp-on-wheels.

During a summer a team of caravaners brings an oasis of revival and rehabilitation to many churches that have no adequate youth programs. Some are small, struggling churches, rural and urban. Others are neither small nor struggling but badly in need of stimulation.

And many churches can back up the claim that a caravan can work wonders in a short time. Within ten years nearly 4,500 young people and counselors in the Methodist Church alone have brought their regenerating services to approximately 12,000 churches in 43 states, Mexico, Europe, and Cuba.

George Reid was one of the five members in a team devoting their summer to ten days of intensive training at a caravan training conference and a week's stop in each of seven different church communities throughout southern Texas. The other members consisted of three college students—Bob Holtz, Mareta Siceloff, Gladys Tobler—and a counselor, Mrs. C. F. Welch. The four young people were from universities in Arizona, California, and Nebraska, and the counselor was a "house-mother" in one of the girls' dorms at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. Besides this particular caravan the Methodist Church had eighty-seven others

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at work that summer in forty-three states across the country.

Like work campers, caravaners give their services without salary. George's team members had paid their own transportation from home or college to the Southwestern Caravan Training Center at Abilene, Texas, and their incidental expenses as well. Each local church they were scheduled to serve assumed responsibility for their transportation from that community to the next one on the caravan route, and church members, like the Marshalls, provided room and board.

The Marshalls' church was George's seventh and last stop, and he had become accustomed to the unexpected. One week a uniformed maid had ushered him up softly-carpeted stairs to a room with a private bath and a Spanish balcony. The following week he had bunked in the attic of a country farmhouse and had bathed in a washtub by the kitchen stove. Some hosts expected him to entertain them every waking minute he was in their homes. Others set out to amuse him. One of them, for example, treated him to a rousing round with the Texas Rangers in the family album.

Even reactions like Todd's were not unexpected any more. While the minister at the first caravan town had not exactly looked for camels, he had expected freaks. The Reverend Henry Comstock had confessed this the last day of the caravaners' stay at his parish. "I was afraid of this project. Thought you might be 'duds'

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or at least heavy on the pious side. I placed you in our most conservative, older-member families where all the children have grown up and gone away. I was afraid the rest of us with our teen-age and toddler tribes wouldn't be restrained enough for you.

"You'll never know how much I appreciate what you have said and done. You have given our adults a real lift. Some of them haven't seen that they are teaching religion on a hayride just as much as they are in class Sunday morning. And it's been hard for some of our parents and teachers to see that if we don't have a good recreation program for our youth, they'll find it somewhere else! I tell them that whatever enriches life has spiritual value.

"You girls with your lipsticks and your Bibles on their guest room bureaus and you boys with your prayers and laughter at their tables did something all my talking has failed to do. You see, the young folk seem externally indifferent to many of the traditional Christian patterns the adults know. You have helped prove to the older people that below the surface many of those teen-agers have a genuine Christian outlook and experience."

At the second Texas town the caravaners had found the Methodist Youth Fellowship all in a dither. It seemed that in filling out the "Analysis of Church and Community," a data sheet sent in by local churches to the training conference, this local youth group had

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made a distressing discovery about their town. Not too far from the church several hundred families living in Quonset huts had only one public water faucet for drinking, bathing, and cooking.

Before any of the caravaners really got both feet in the town, the M.Y.F. were asking, "What can we do? It was better not knowing. Now we're upset because we can't do anything about it!"

The caravaners with the M.Y.F., pastor, and other concerned church members sat down to a three-hour evening session Monday night and worked out a plan of action. Publicity, speaking, and visitation committees were appointed. The publicity committee got a reporter interested and he played up the situation in the newspaper. One of the Fellowship girls who was secretary to the woman's editor at the local radio station got her boss to devote the fifteen-minute Wednesday morning "Recipe Recital" to the story of "One Water Faucet." The visitation committee called on the mayor and the health and fire department officials. When the caravaners spoke at the luncheon club meetings that had been arranged for them, they told the varied audiences of the concern of the Methodist young people about the health and fire hazards they had discovered.

Even while the caravan was still there, Friday night's paper carried a statement promising action by the Health Department. Two weeks after the caravaners had left this town, a car full of M.Y.F. members drove a

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hundred and fifty miles to visit and report to George Reid that a water system was to be established in the neighborhood and, "They're digging the ditches for the pipes!"

At the third stop the caravan found young people who were far from being in a dither about community service. They were too complacent. That's why the young minister had sent an S.O.S. for a caravan. The local Survey Committee had filled out the data sheet and had calmly printed "None needed here" under the section "Community Service Projects."

George and Bob set out with this Survey Committee to see if the community was indeed as ideal as the young people thought. The first place they visited was the Home for the Aged. George took them there with the vague thought that maybe he could interest the local young people enough to bring entertainment to those who lived in the Home.

In touring the grounds with the matron, however, she casually dropped the perfect project in their laps. "If the cost of living ever comes down," she said, "we hope to save enough in the kitchen to build two runways, back and front. Our wheel-chair residents ought to be able to get out on the lawn by themselves. Now they have to sit around and wait for our overburdened staff to carry them up and down the steps. Some of them are just too sweet and considerate to ask and don't get out at all."

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At that evening's youth forum, nine high school boys who had taken manual training volunteered to assume the runway building project. Five girls offered to do the job of soliciting material and borrowing the tools needed.

A letter from the president of this group, the boy who headed the project, reached George about a month later. "I don't know," he wrote, "which was more fun—building the runways or listening to the tall tales of those old folks who hung around and talked to us as we worked. One of the men used to be a cabinetmaker, and did he get a kick out of it when we reported to him for work every morning and called him 'Boss' as he gave us the tips of the building trade! All of those old folks, in and out of wheel chairs, were so appreciative. One of the ladies made a Gibson Girl hair ribbon for me to give my sister!

"They were so happy to have us around it just made all of us want to do more for them. Some of us are going to see that our high school orchestra and our church choir go out there with dress rehearsal or repeat performance of the annual concert and Easter cantata. We're going to take some of our Sunday night discussion meetings out there, too. I never had such a worthwhile summer, and when I get to Texas U. myself, I plan to team up with a caravan just as soon as I've completed the two college years I need in order to be eligible."

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The fourth stop had looked at first glance like a Dali desert scene. After nearly a hundred miles of open-country driving, the Greyhound bus finally pulled up at their destination. George took in the entire town with one glance. All it had were five corners. Across the street stood a sprawling house that called itself with simple bravery and uncertain hand lettering "The Hotel." The other corners boasted a gas station, a combination farm machinery and hardware shop, a grocery and drug store all in one, and a weather-beaten church.

Unlike most Texas and California churches, this one had no hint of Spanish architecture. Someone with New England ancestry had built this church long ago and then forgotten it. It was a tall, narrow wooden frame building with belfry and spire, but the spire was tilted now, giving the church a rakish silhouette. The churchyard was overgrown with sagebrush and weeds; many of the windows were cracked, all of them were dirty and had a vacant look. It was impossible to tell what color the paint might originally have been, for there wasn't any of it left.

The advance preparation data sheets, filled out by the graduate student pastor who came down from Dallas once a month to preach, had many gaps. There was, of course, no organized Youth Fellowship; indeed, there was not even a Sunday school. The only use made of the church was for the meeting of a handful of the faithful on the Sunday morning when the student pastor was in

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town. He was giving what time he could without salary and had informed the district superintendent that if something wasn't done soon this church would join the ranks of ghost churches found in many parts of rural America today. The caravaners had been suggested as an exploring party to see if this was a spot where a church work camp might be set up the next year for an all-summer program. Most caravan teams are given at least one such "problem child" — this was theirs.

The caravan had, of course, been scheduled to arrive the week end the student pastor was due. But a wire had reached Mrs. Welch just before the caravan pulled out of the previous town, saying that the pastor would not be there because his child had been stricken with polio. Bob Holtz would be able to do the preaching, but who would ease their entry into the community? Nothing in their training conference had prepared them for such an emergency on their "problem" assignment.

When the bus had gone, leaving the caravaners surrounded by their luggage at the five corners, they silently asked one another, "What on earth are we going to do?" There was a young boots-and-spur contingent squatting outside the hardware store, their horses saddled at the hitching post, but none of them moved. Nobody acted as if it were not the most ordinary thing in the world for a Greyhound bus to stop at the forlorn junction and let out a load of passengers.

"Pick up your feet now and maybe your hearts will

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beat again," said Mom Welch. "We've had six weeks' field work now. We ought to be able to manage this."

They crossed the street to "The Hotel" and entered. Nobody was in the long low-ceilinged lounge that looked like the retirement center for old wickerware. George pressed the bell on the counter.

"Just a minute!" someone shouted. Then a young woman came down the stairs. "Heard the bus stoppin'," she said, smoothing down her dress, "and reckoned it must be the caravan. Didn't want you all to catch me in my ridin' breeches so ran up and changed."

When she had shown them to their rooms on the second floor, she held them all at their doors while she explained that she and her dad ran the hotel, although it wasn't really a hotel at all. In the winter they took the sign down and it became the "teacherage" for the women who taught at Consolidated County High "twenty miles down yonder bus route." She was quite a talker and rambled on about how shy the "membership" was about "sleepin' company." The plan was for them to sleep and eat breakfast at the hotel. "Six of the membership are goin' to take turns preparin' lunch for you all to eat at the church. Six others would like fine to provide supper for you all at their homesteads."

Without pausing for breath she asked them where they'd been, if they were tired, and what they'd done. They told her—as much as they could get in edgewise. Finally she left them to do their unpacking.

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A few minutes later each of them in their rooms—they compared notes later—heard her on the party line. Her telephone voice had town crier timbre, and the walls were thin. She was obviously talking to the operator. “Ring the membership, Sally-Ray, and tell ’em all five of ’em are here. Not a bit dulled and specky like we thought they’d be either. There’s not a dry stick among ’em, even the chaproner is kinda lively lookin’. And Sally-Ray, be sure you tell the membership not to cook up any fried chicken. The pore things had it five times in Almeda!” There was not a thing they had told her or that they wore or looked like that didn’t get transmitted by phone.

In a week the churchyard was weeded, the windows repaired and washed, the floors inside scrubbed, and the walls washed down. It was a parish that believed in tithing, and a young member of nearly every homestead in the twenty-five-mile radius of the church tithed a day of service and brought some of the material needed in the work done. The “membership” was very much interested in the idea that a work camp might come the following year for an eight-week session and help them do a real job of rehabilitation.

A Youth Fellowship was organized, Sunday school classes set up, and help given in ordering teaching supplies. The group increased from thirty-nine on Sunday morning to one hundred and one at Friday night’s closing dedication service. That evening several young peo-

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ple were moved to make public their rededication to the Christian faith.

Bob himself grew up a lot that week. Boys and girls, not very much younger than he was himself, came to him with troubled spirits and personal problems. It might have gone to his head; instead it went to his heart. In learning to say, "I don't know" when he really didn't know, he became more humble and mature.

There was no gang of boys covertly watching the Greyhound bus that was flagged at the five corners the next Saturday noon. They and others were all at the bus stop back-slapping George, Bob, and one another. The girls and Mom got firm handshakes of appreciation. Several of the more motherly "membership" kissed the girls good-by and shed a parting tear or two.

So it went during the seven weeks of travel, each of the five caravaners in the team serving in his special field: George Reid in community and interracial understanding, Bob Holtz in worship and evangelism, Mareta Siceloff in recreation and leisure, Gladys Tobler in missions and world friendship, and Mrs. Welch in classes on youth leadership for adults. Every day—afternoons and evenings—they worked with intermediates, seniors, and adults. The mornings they had to themselves for rest, program preparation, visits to barbershops and beauty parlors, washing and pressing their clothes.

Sundays they learned to take four and five assignments in their stride. Breakfast and dinner were usually

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eaten at their "caravan home" and lunch the group had together in the church or with one of the town's civic groups if they had been scheduled to speak. They were photographed and written up in local and county newspapers, their story appeared as a feature in a state-circulated syndicate, and their voices were heard over many local radio programs. One of their sister caravan teams in Pennsylvania attracted national attention when *Life* magazine told their story with pictures under the heading "Life Goes on a Caravan."

As results of their work, boys and girls who had never led in public prayer before found themselves doing so under the influence and inspiration of the caravaners. Offerings were taken in churches that had never before expressed financial concern for others; some of these offerings were earmarked for missions at home and abroad and overseas relief. Many young people learned more about the distribution of the money that they pledge to the Methodist Youth Fund and were inspired to plan for more adequate promotion of the fund all through the year. At each place the closing communion service of dedication gave the young people of the churches an opportunity to renew their commitment to the cause of Christ.

And George *did* make up to young Todd Marshall for coming without his camel. At the workshop on community service that George led in the Marshalls' church,

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he told the young people about libraries-on-wheels, a scheme that has been successfully used in many ranching communities where neighbors are miles apart and libraries nonexistent. He suggested that the ranchers themselves could make a library by pooling their own books, bringing them to church, and setting up a system of loan and return. The young people were thrilled with the idea and set about at once to solicit books and to index them, promising to keep them in good repair and take charge of circulation Sunday mornings after church. With the money collected on fines, new books would be purchased.

At Christmas Mrs. Marshall scribbled on the back of a greeting card to George Reid, "We didn't realize how ready Todd was for good books. Wallace was never much of a reader, and not being a boy somehow I missed up on getting books like *Treasure Island*. Todd is sure crazy about that book. Pirates are far more glamorous to him now than camels! And he says he wouldn't know about pirates if you hadn't come. By the way, we not only circulate books now, we loan one another magazines, children's toys, and patterns—all through the church library, which the young people are running just fine. Write and tell us how you're getting along in your journalism courses. Religious publicity work is a new field to me, but I fully expect to see one of your books in our fine church library some day. Won't we be proud to have known the author 'when'?"

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Scores of young people in several denominations who first tested their Christian commitment on the caravan route are now full-time ministers, religious education directors, social workers, and church publication editors across our country. Others are missionary doctors, teachers, literacy experts, and evangelists in India, China, and South America. Many in other types of work say that caravanning helped them to be more Christian as parents, lawyers, merchants, or farmers.

Summing it all up on his "Season's Report," George Reid wrote, "Caravanning is its own reward. I know more about Texas rural life than I could have discovered in a year of living on a ranch. I learned to stand up quietly and present my interpretation of the Christian ideal before people who were concerned only about their private interests, whose world was a short and narrow Main Street, and whose Christianity was so chicken-winged it couldn't fly higher than their neighbor's fence.

"I took a lot of lessons from the few big people I met in every situation, people who have outgrown selfishness and narrowness and crippling regionalism. From them I took a transfusion in courage and purpose. I felt within myself the renewal of a right spirit and joy in the irresistible power of constructive good will. I had always thought in reading 'A man must be born again' that it would be a lightning-quick experience—my being born again required a season with a caravan."

chapter nine

Something New in Missions

DON TOMÁS GUTIÉREZ, THE POST-master of San Sebastián, beamed over the contents of Box 198. Today he had his heart's desire. There was at least one letter apiece for each of the young Americans at El Guacio. He studied the postmarks from Texas, Kansas, California, Ohio, Louisiana, Nebraska, and Missouri. Far more than the Star Spangled Banner fluttering outside, the presence of these letters in his post office made him feel that Puerto Rico was part of the United States.

There were packages, too, for it was nearing Christmas. He examined with lively interest the gay labels showing Christmas trees and snow and gilded church spires and children in bright red mittens and sturdy boots. So different from the Christmas scene in San Sebastián! Outside his post office the tropical sun glittered on the thimbles, pots, and pans in the carts that lined the street. And the sunbrown feet of the children

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were bare. This might well be a homesick time for those young Americans. He, Don Tomás, must see to it they had a real Puerto Rican Christmas. *Lechón asado*—the finest roasting pig in the land! That's what he'd give the *jovenes* for their Christmas dinner.

All morning Don Tomás worked with one eye on the door, watching for someone from El Guacio to appear for the mail. When Jean Alexander drove up, he was out at the curb talking rapidly before she had eased the station wagon between the vendors' carts.

"Wait a minute there," Jean had to remind Don Tomás. "My Spanish is too feeble for all that rapid-fire good cheer. Take it *despacio*."

He spoke then with elaborate slowness, but when Jean understood about the Christmas pig she was as delighted as he could have wished. Such a fine girl and such a novel head of hair—entirely flaming red—he thought to himself.

Jean Alexander waited until the evening devotions were over and everybody was relaxing in the living room of the Casa Grande before she sprang her news. "Don Tomás is giving us a pig."

"Wonderful!" cried Jean Harbison. "How soon will it have little pigs?"

"Muddy pastures or concrete flooring?" Roy Walsdorf tipped his chair precariously to get at the pencil and paper on the sideboard back of him. "Wonder how many cement blocks a pigpen will take."

SOMETHING NEW IN MISSIONS

"Listen, you all." Paul Young looked up from his reading. "You talked me into goat barns, rabbit hutches, and chicken coops, but a pigpen—oh, what's the use! Might as well be a martyr now as later. Guess I'll look up and see what Professor Frank Morrison says pigs will thrive on." Paul went to consult the cattle-man's handbook—*Feeds and Feeding*—the only best-seller he took time to read these days.

Everybody laughed. Paul's conversion from a Texas city boy to a Puerto Rican animal man had been painful to none but him, and even he was now a happy convert.

"Now hold on, gang." Jean Alexander had been trying to get a word in. "This is a pig for roasting. For our Christmas dinner. I don't think you can talk Don Tomás into the obliging lady pig you have in mind."

"Bet we do," said Stanley Harbison.

On the menu at the first Christmas dinner at El Guacio there was no *roast pig*. Don Tomás had thrown up his hands in gracious defeat. There was no arguing with practical people like these who pointed out that "a pig in the pen is worth two on the spit."

But the kind of people they were was also a puzzle to the mountain farmers of Guacio. Out of thatched-roof shelters, little more than windbreaks nestled in the eroded hills, the *jíbaros* came to see what was going on at the Casa Grande. What kind of men were these who washed dishes as casually as they handled the welding

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torch? What kind of women were these who dug drainage ditches in the vegetable patches as lightly as they threaded a needle? Wasn't education a passport to freedom from manual labor? If these people were educated—they spoke Spanish as well as English and were graduates of schools and colleges—why then did they soil their hands like peasants?

Occasional American tourists were no less mystified. The sun-bronzed faces and mud-smeared jeans, as well as the very evident youth of these boys and girls, made them look more like a soda fountain crowd than religious workers. "Are you a new kind of missionary?" the visitors would ask, openly scanning the grounds for some sign of a church. Even when they heard the whole story they weren't quite sure whether the answer to that one was "Yes"; it certainly was not "No."

The story, like all reports of pioneer achievement, sounds deceptively simple. During the war the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. had bought a 100-acre farm with a well built large frame house on it for use of servicemen from the Borinquén air base at Aguadilla. When the war was over and the men gone, there was the washed-out land and there stood the empty Casa Grande.

Somebody had dreamed up and even had drawn up the plans for a rural rehabilitation project. The neat ink drawings showed modern farm buildings, staff dormitory, warehouses and worksheds, a recreation center, a

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hospital and clinic, a school, a chapel, and conference grounds. All that in a region that had never before had any community property at all!

The dream called for the land to be restored to provide maintenance for the workers and the center to become a farm demonstration unit. The material for the buildings would come from the timber in the woods, the gravel from the Guacio River, and the sand from the shore of the Atlantic Ocean. El Guacio, so named after the river bordering it, was to be a demonstration to the *jibaro* that he, too, could draw on the natural resources around him and himself break down the isolation and neglect in which he existed.

But where would the trained workers come from to clear this land, fell the trees, mine the gravel, haul the sand, plow the fields, and construct the buildings? Who would submit to a stretch of lonely, simple living in that bleak area of silent mountains? The only social contacts would be with neighbors who might have finished three grades of school or none at all; with families who exist on an income of little more than \$5.00 a week; with individuals who have known only the drug of work wielding a machete on the sugar cane plantations followed by the narcotic of sleep in a hammock.

No, no country club escapes here! In fact, not even a room of one's own. The building was planned to house the workers in the already existing Casa Grande. Wouldn't the high salaries required to entice qualified

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construction men, teachers, nurses, doctors, pastors, farmers, and office staff, defeat the purpose of low cost demonstration?

Dr. Edward A. Odell, partly responsible for the dream, thought high salaries weren't going to defeat anything for the simple reason that there wouldn't be any salaries! "Christian young people will build El Guacio. Living and travel expenses, yes, and they can accept \$10.00 a month if they want to. It shouldn't cost more than about \$600.00 a year to maintain each worker and amortize the travel expense."

Nobody laughed. It was too preposterous for laughter. Where in luxury-loving America with its self-centered, sophisticated youth could such idealists be found? Clearly forty years of devotion to Presbyterian enterprises in Puerto Rico had gone to Dr. Odell's head!

The appeal for workers was broadcast by flyers and word of mouth in colleges and at youth fellowship meetings, Presbyterian and interdenominational, across the country. The "help-wanted" story pulled no punches. This was not for glamour girls and adventure boys. This was rugged. "Candidates must volunteer for two years of service, must be able to pass rigid health examinations, must learn Spanish, and must be willing to accept the sacrifices of group living and group work as well as individual responsibility for specific tasks, physical and spiritual."

Dr. Odell had been right before. He was right again.

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Thirty applications came in! All applicants were carefully screened by the Personnel Department of the Presbyterian Board of National Missions. Out of that first lot, seven were chosen and, as their schedules permitted, they departed for El Guacio. From year to year the program has grown and applications are still coming in. New recruits replace those whose terms expire, and additional staff members are being sought as the program expands.

Jean and Stanley Harbison, in on the dream and the architect's plans, were the first to arrive at El Guacio in January, 1946. Even with their two years completed, they couldn't get rid of the project. They spent their first few months back in the States on an extensive lecture tour to recruit young Americans with background and training in home economics, business administration, agriculture, construction, and medicine for this short-term course in sacrificial Christian living.

"We went to El Guacio," says attractive young Mrs. Harbison, "with the idea of using our church's land and our staff's combined talents to try to resolve in one small area of the land the vicious circle of poverty, neglect, and human disintegration that exists. For us, the religion of Christ is a force making possible a creative life for all people, but we are quite convinced that only preaching about that life will not save a little boy of seven who weighs nineteen pounds.

"We have a lot to do before the people will be physi-

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cally or mentally capable of understanding what we wish to teach. They're sick. They're tired. They're extremely discouraged. Suicide is the second cause of death among Puerto Rican youth today. The people see no hope of educating their children, of bettering their home standards, of earning more money, of getting better food, or of enjoying the world they vaguely know exists because they hear about it occasionally through a radio in a mountain store."

The Reverend Donald D. Dod, known to the gang as "D³," interrupted his career as a university teacher and pastor and transported his wife "Tudy" and their four small children down to El Guacio to succeed the Harbisons. "They call me the director, but that can mean anything from milking goats to signing checks. I may be a pastor without a church and a teacher without a school, but some day the people of the parish we are building up will pitch in and erect the school and the chapel where faith and good works are one."

Roy Walsdorf, a skilled sheet metal worker, says, "My plans for my own business in a mechanical shop in New Orleans can wait." During his first eighteen months at El Guacio he built the workshop, equipped it with hand and power tools, laid the foundation of the community center, renovated a home for the Dod family, remodeled the basement of the Casa Grande as a temporary clinic, and turned out thousands of cement blocks for future construction.

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Paul D. Young of Houston took a two-year leave of absence from Davidson College, North Carolina, where he was working on his B.A. degree. He is using at El Guacio the training his father, a master cabinetmaker, gave him. He has worked with Roy and built, in addition, most of the animal shelters. Animal-hating turned out to be a pose with Paul. It was he alone who persevered in trying to save a runt pig, Junior, by forced feeding every four hours, day and night, for seventy-two harrowing hours. The nursery equipment was goat's milk in a coke bottle capped with a rubber nipple. Shrieking Junior gave up the ghost, however, and died peacefully in the arms of Paul, his favorite human being.

Don Martinson, young graduate of Friends University, coping with two dumb oxen on hilly land, sighed for the mechanized farming of the Kansas fields he knew so well. Every letter home ended, "Oh, brother, what I couldn't do with a tractor!" He got so he dreamed of nice young red-coated tractors skipping over the El Guacio slopes. His friends in the Westminster Fellowship at Wichita, Kansas, got together. "This is getting serious. Let's save the boy from a tractor neurosis." They started a campaign, and Don with a tractor and the advice of soil experts from the Agricultural Experiment Station at Mayagüez made headway in breaking open the old, unused land at El Guacio.

Jean Alexander, a public school teacher from Ohio,

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sailed for El Guacio in January, 1946. She organized a 4-H Club for *jíbaro* girls and proudly saw them, the poorest girls in the area, take off more of the prizes on Achievement Day than any other club. Jean assisted the volunteer Puerto Rican doctor with inoculations, first aid, and examination of the patients who line up in front of the temporary clinic twice a week. At the mountain homes Jean also carried on conversational courses in nutrition and hygiene. Her young Methodist friends in Ohio took stock of her wistful comment about what she could do with a softball. They collected and came across with a carton of outdoor play equipment.

Ann Shaffer, chief cook, bottle washer, and pants presser for the gang, was Jean's understudy for work in clinic and mountain home. She had to work hard to unlimber her book Spanish.

Ana Inés Braulio, nicknamed "Nanín," says, "I came out from the Polytechnic Institute to volunteer for a few days' work. I decided if Paul could interrupt his college career, I could, too. So here I am." Among a round of activities in a day that begins at 5:45 A.M. and ends about 9 P.M., Nanín has found time to take over the 4-H Club started by Jean Alexander and the sewing cooperative started by Jean Harbison. Through church groups in the States, the highly salable art embroidery goods are marketed at profits shared in by the women.

With the exception of the director, every one of these

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volunteer workers is under 30. In fact, the average age is 23. Young in age, they are amazingly mature in spirit and outlook. "We shall discover God's will for our lives and do it in building a more Christian America through Presbyterian home missions," they say. The fact that some belong to another denomination is no handicap. The group at one time or another has included Episcopal and Methodist as well as Presbyterian young people. This interdenominational flavor and the fact that the interdenominational Home Missions Council sent donations to build up the goat herd have had a stimulating effect on young Puerto Rican Christians.

Young Puerto Ricans from various Protestant schools and churches now have an opportunity for fellowship at El Guacio. They come in large numbers for week ends and during Easter and summer vacations to live, work, and worship. They are building a new pattern of Christian effectiveness through cooperation, helping to develop a new attitude toward physical labor which they have been taught to look down upon.

Already over half of the arable land of El Guacio is under cultivation. The *jibaro* has seen imported mayorbela field corn produce 3,800 pounds an acre as compared to the 500-pound yield of native corn. Large gardens introducing new vegetables to the district have produced several abundant harvests. The *jibaros* themselves now plant lettuce, cabbage, and Swiss chard to supplement the deficient diet of the eternal bean.

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In one season over 100 tons of sugar were cut at El Guacio. About 35,000 oranges and over a ton of coffee were sold. Orchards with lemon, lime, banana, avocado, and grapefruit trees have been laid out. All these activities will ultimately make El Guacio a marketing center for minor fruits and are leading right into the newest scheme for a canning cooperative. Part of the land has been set aside for clearance as a baseball field, and landscaping on the chapel and conference grounds has a place in the plans.

El Guacio now has a resident missionary doctor. Young James Bert McCandless — B.S., Harvard, 1942; M.D., University of Pittsburgh, 1945 — and his wife, a trained nurse, have been appointed by the Board of National Missions of their church to work with the two-year volunteers to develop the medical side of the program.

In the Dod home an on-the-spot Sunday school is springing up naturally around the Dod and *jíbaro* children. When the first church bells sound in El Guacio, they will ring in the ears of a people who know what the preaching is all about. El Guacio is no longer “somebody’s dream.” It’s a postgraduate course in one-world living. It’s a laboratory for the missions of tomorrow. It’s young-blooded from the word go.

And proof that the word is “go!” is Box 198 in San Sebastián today. Soon Postmaster Don Tomás will be able to make the boast he looks forward to—that mail

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from every state in the Union has lain in that box. As for his worrying any more about the *jóvenes* at El Guacio being homesick—nonsense! They like Puerto Rico! And as for the now famous Christmas pig he gave them—the one that escaped the roasting spit—as Don Tomás puts it, “She has descendants grunting at El Guacio this very *momento*.”

chapter ten

World in Their Hearts

LONELY AS A BIRD'S NEST ON THE mountain, the ancient Indian village of Taxhay lay as in enchanted sleep. Along the narrow paths the stately organ cacti rose like six-foot sentinels keeping silent watch. The sloping corn paths, arid in the white heat, were deserted of men and oxen. Not even a dog or goat stirred on any of the trails. The only signs of habitation were the maguey-thatched roofs of the houses, shyly visible behind the crumbling stone walls. It was as if the whole village slept. But it was hiding. Today the *Amigos de la Paz* were to come.

In the *Escuela Rural Federal*, row after row of small, earth-brown children—ragged and barefoot—sat in trancelike quiet. At any moment now the message of the hour of arrival, brought by the grinder of knives, would come up the mountain trail from Las Trancas. Truly, recitations were impossible.

"Tell us the story again, Señor Sandoval." Lazaro's

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smile was soft and coaxing. "The one about the *Amigos* who worked in the dangerous swamp."

Leo Sandoval made a graceful, helpless gesture. To prepare the village for the American Friends Service Committee work campers who were coming to Taxhay for the summer, he had told stories of their work in other Mexican villages, knowing the children would retell them in Otomi at home. Now the *Norteamericanos'* adventures had become their favorite subject. Even Cinderella and the miracle of the cavalero's sandal had been forgotten. Few of the children, isolated as little eagles in their mountain nest, had ever seen a *Norte-americano*.

"They are taller than we are, their skin is white as the driven snow, their hair the color of corn before it is ground, and some of them have eyes blue as the cloudless morning sky." Rosita said all this as if repeating a lesson too full of magic to be understood. What a fall from grace as a storyteller he would suffer, Leo thought, if all of the American boys were dark!

Lazaro began telling the story himself: "There were twenty *Amigos* who came to Vera Cruz. Though they were grown to man's size they were still in schools as is a custom in *Los Estados Unidos*. They were studying to be men of importance in their old age—doctors and engineers and lawyers—and they came to Tolome . . ." The boy stopped, abruptly conscious of all the serious eyes on him, accusing him of being a presuming one.

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"Sí," urged Leo gently. It took much patience to break through the reserve of these Indian children who were used to being seen but not heard.

Lazaro shook his bowed head.

"*Pués*, but you could tell it just as well as I." Leo picked up the story.

"In the village of Tolome, there was a big swamp full of mosquitoes that brought malaria to the people. The *Amigos de la Paz* came to drain off the swamp and clear the land. With Mexican engineers and workingmen and farmers like your fathers and older brothers, they dug a draining ditch nearly two miles long. They worked in immense rubber boots, which they drew on up to their waists, for they often stood knee-deep in swamp mud. They had to watch out for dangerous water snakes, tarantulas, and scorpions. They worked from half past six in the morning until half past two in the afternoon when the steaming heat of the jungle became unbearable.

"Then they returned to their camp in near-by Paso de Ovejas and swam in the river to cleanse and refresh themselves. They cooked all their own meals, washed and mended their own clothes, and swept their floors, for they had no women of their own to do this for them.

"At first the villagers did not welcome these *Norteamericanos*. They muttered among themselves, 'They are digging for oil.' Others said, 'No, they are searching for the hidden relics of our old gods to take away with

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them.' But it was not so, for when the ditch was finished and the land cleared, it was given to the villagers that corn might grow where once there had been nothing but evil water.

"The people of the villages of Tolome and Paso de Ovejas got together and gave the Americans a farewell *fiesta*. The women wore their brightest *rebozos* and the men their *fiesta gapanes* in the processions and the dancing. The sound of guitars lifted the night out of itself. Last of all came an orator, hired for the occasion, a man skilled in speaking words that were in the villagers' hearts but words it was impossible to say themselves."

"And what did the orator say?" Leo asked the spell-bound children.

As a chorus, they recited, "The streets will weep in silence when they hear not your footsteps. The sun will leave a blinding loneliness where once your shadows passed and pass no more."

"None of this land they took for themselves?" Lazaro always asked this. The purpose of the Friends' work, although the boy could not have put it that way, haunted him. "Nor any money?"

"No, they got nothing that a man may see or touch with his hands. They took only what they could carry in their hearts and minds. What they gave and what they received is a way of serving God and being blessed by him."

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Understanding slowly lit up Lazaro's face. "It is a form of penance they do!"

Leo pondered that one in bitter amusement. How could he explain to these children, hanging to life by a thread, the principles of sharing, peace, and friendship that had motivated the young men who had come to Mexico? How could he penetrate the high wall of poverty, all that these children knew, that shut each man off from another with his own stark need? Let it be for the moment. Perhaps at the end of the summer it would be possible for him to lead their minds along a path they now had too little experience to travel.

"Don't forget"—Rosita's eyes grew big with the fascinating horror of the picture in her mind—"the story about the earthquake when the land split apart and water came up where no water had been and all the houses fell down in Tuxpan like corn husks."

"When the earthquake came to Tuxpan," Leo began again, "over half of the houses were ruined and the two schools collapsed. It happened at the time the fields were waiting to be plowed. If the men did not plow and plant, there would be hunger as well as homelessness. What were the people to do?"

"Where would they go from the rain?" cried Rosita. "And the thunder?"

"*Sí*," Leo smiled. It was so good to see the children giving way to enthusiasm. "Where would the people go? The *Amigos* had come before to clear the swamp.

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Would they come for the earthquake? Of course. Forty-four *Norteamericanos* came to Tuxpan. They cleared away the debris of the broken houses and made quick shelters for the people to live in until they could rebuild their own homes. The *Amigos* then helped to put up the two schoolhouses. Even the old grandmothers and the children, smaller than the least of you, took part in the work. They carried water and sand long distances in cooking pots and jars to make mortar."

Leo paused, but the children would give him no respite.

"What did the priest say?" Demetrio insisted. "Read the words to us."

But Leo had read them so often he knew them by heart. "I have seen the self-denial of the young men who left their university studies or worthy occupations and, condescending to our humble methods, work sweating underneath our sun. I am extremely thankful, and my heart overflows with the love that I have for them."

"And there are now *señoritas* who come?" Rosita was trying to lure him into another story.

"During and since the war, American *señoritas* have come to work in schools and clinics in many villages."

"Are we to teach our *Amigos* Spanish?"

"Yes," laughed Leo, "and see that they are good words to be proud of!"

"He comes!" The children nearest the door were

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shouting. "The old one who grinds knives! He is at the head of the trail! See?"

Leo knew a moment of panic. Had everything been done? He dismissed the school, warning the children not to forget the songs of welcome and the flags. He reminded Lazaro to go for *Tío* Daniel to bring the waiting pack burros down the mountain.

The old grinder appeared in the doorway. "*Los Amigos* have telephoned from Mexico City. They are leaving in cars, *Señor*."

"*¡Sí! Sí!*" Leo was impatient. "When? When did the call come?"

"At ten o'clock, *Señor*, and I have come quickly as you wished."

It was nearly one o'clock now. For the old man to ascend and for Leo to climb back down the mountain would take, he estimated, almost as long as for the cars to come the two hundred miles from Mexico City. If they should arrive at the appointed place of meeting before him! . . . He sped down the steep mountain trail.

But he was in good time. The highway was deserted and the town beyond silent with *siesta*. As he waited, Leo wondered if the American boys would be able to stand the isolation of Taxhay. When first he had read about the work campers in Mexico, he had been amazed that university students would be willing to do manual labor under Mexican bosses and live camp style. This

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had not been his experience with Americans in Los Angeles when he had lived there. But how well he knew that all men of a country were never to be judged by the acts of a few. How often he had wished that some of these students could come to Taxhay. But Taxhay had seemed too remote in time and place to hope for that.

Approachable only by burro and on foot, four to five up-hill walking hours from the highway running through Las Trancas, Taxhay was a place to which no one of distinction ever came. Even the priest came up the trail not more than once in two years. If the village had any leaders at all, they were the native Otomi judge and himself, a simple rural schoolteacher who had come back to Mexico to help his country in its battle with illiteracy.

It had done no harm to dream that if the *Americanos* did come, they could help the Otomis build a store in the village. Taxhay did not even have a store. Essentials were brought up the trail as they were needed, each family struggling under its own load. But if they had a store that could be stocked by the burro train, think of the lost hours saved for more productive labor!

The thought had grown irresistible. Léo had written at last to the American Friends Service Committee and in answer to their reply had journeyed to Mexico City to meet Ray Newton. When Mr. Newton intimated it was possible that a work camp might come to Taxhay, Leo's conscientiousness overcame him.

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"It would require an authentic Mexican saint. It's too much to ask of young people who have been so generous with themselves in my country."

"There are a few other people in the world like you, Leo." Ray Newton's point of view had been reassuring. "You're young yourself, and you're also an educated man, but still you've been willing to make sacrifices for the Taxhayans for seven years. I think we can find some young Americans who would be willing to share an experience in service like yours for seven weeks."

And now they were coming, nine American young men from colleges across the United States with their young director, Glen Fisher, and his wife, Lorita.

Lazaro and *Tío* Daniel appeared with the burros and sat down beside him in silence under the mesquite trees along the highway. One by one several of the older children began to appear. They carried little paper flags of Mexico and the United States. They knew that Leo had wanted them all to wait at the top of the trail, but their curiosity had conquered. Now they stood uncertainly, ready, if their teacher told them to disappear, to do just that.

"We can help, *Señor*. I myself will carry the equal of a grinding stone!" Rosita certainly had a vivid imagination. Leo tweaked her dark braids, a gesture he knew would be accepted by the laconic children to mean that he was not angry.

The cars came at last. As the tall, youthful strangers

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emerged, the children stared in fascination, forgetting to wave their stiff little flags in welcome.

From the beginning Leo knew that all was well. They were warm and friendly; there was no formality about them. He was "Leo" and they were "Glen," "Lorita," "Dick," "Doc," "Free," and a jumble of other names he would learn soon.

The cars were unloaded and the burros packed with camping equipment, duffel bags, radio, phonograph, records, and food supplies. The shy but merry-eyed children, each bearing some small burden as if it were a trophy, started up the steep ascent.

Up one mountain, round a second, and up a third to Taxhay, along the clay-packed, desert-dry curves and trails. Never had the trip seemed so short to Leo. He turned constantly to Dick Gattineau behind him and called to Freeman Keith ahead of him, enjoying their responses to the breath-taking scenery, answering their questions about the lack of rain and the altitude.

"Seven thousand feet above sea level," Leo told them.

The sun was sinking as they neared the end of the trail, and once again Leo experienced the elemental thrill that had been his when first he had seen Taxhay. This was the one gift Taxhay could offer — the flow of mountains in unending waves, the thousand scenes of brown and green that had no beginning and no end, the white cross gleaming in the sunset, the whispering evening coolness of the mesquite trees.

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They went then to Leo's home where Tomasa Sandoval had prepared the meal of welcome. Tomasa was a beautiful, vivacious village girl whom Leo had married shortly after he came to Taxhay.

After a feast of tortillas, eggs, mangoes, and peaches, Leo took the boys to the Federal building in which his school was held. Here the villagers had unpacked the burros and stored the gear. Half of the school had been curtained off for camp cots; here the nine boys would sleep. The Fishers were to have the old thatched-roof schoolhouse. All the meals, cooked on a cooperative basis, would be eaten with the Sandovals in the large kitchen of their cottage near by.

"Just like Lowell House," Freeman, who was a junior at Harvard, grinned at Dick as they baked bread in a portable oven over a charcoal *brazero*.

That morning their first gift awaited them outside the schoolhouse — three two-gallon jugs of water. The mountain stream in the grotto where they would wash their clothes, take showers, and get their drinking water was down a steep ravine, practically vertical. *Tío* Daniel, entirely on his own, had made the trip three times with a huge water jug strapped to his back and roped across his head. This he did at dawn every morning of the camp. The water was, of course, boiled and cooled again before being used.

Leo and Tomasa joined the campers at Meditations, which took place in the late dawn. They sat in a circle

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on low stones — above them the azure sky, below them the cloud-topped mountains. Led by Glen Fisher, they thought about the dignity of man and the high destiny he might reach guided by the infinite wisdom of the Creator. Leo learned that many of these boys had come back from war experiences, disturbed in spirit and determined to think their way more deeply into the problems of peace and war and the conditions for a better world. Although some of them were Roman Catholic and no two of them from the same Protestant denomination, Leo felt that all of them were united in seeking to know and do God's will.

Leo was delighted with the work schedule they drew up and executed. First they built a privy, "replete with cement form à la Fisher and bamboo screen à la Taxhay."

"This will serve as a model for the rest of the community," Leo said.

Then the boys excavated plant-supporting soil and hauled it up the ravines to cover the land around the schoolhouse so that Leo could go ahead with his pet project, an experimental garden for the children. Next, the more scientific minded worked on "gassing the ants" in an effort to get rid of the mile-long tunnels of traffic-jammed ants intent on crop destruction. By the end of the second week none of the boys was muscle-bound, and all were ready to start the store. Their part in this project was to haul heavy rocks up from the dis-

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tant ravines so that when the two itinerant Mexican masons arrived about the first of August, the material would be on hand to put up the building.

On a sort of wooden stretcher, which Freeman Keith described as a "dolly without wheels," they loaded as much as two hundred pounds of stone. Two of the boys at each end, tugging and sweating, would carry it up the rocky slopes. They were often chagrined by the sight of the villagers, most of whom were several inches shorter than any of the boys, carrying nearly one hundred pounds on their heads or roped to their backs.

The boys learned to respect the great energy and imagination with which Leo had worked for his village. They saw the tomatoes and peas and goat herd that Leo had introduced. They saw the fences of organ cacti — straight stacks, three inches in diameter, which grew up in a short time to solid six- and eight-foot palisades. This had saved the farmers from building brush fences, a waste in labor and destructive use of the sparse forests that Leo was teaching the villagers to preserve.

When Leo had first come, the school was just a small shack; now it was a large government building, the scene of *fiestas*, community meetings, and occasional court sessions. Leo had encouraged the sale of hats and bags of great beauty, which the Otomi women wove from the fiber of the maguey cactus and from the wool of their native sheep. The women took the hats and bags to sell in the market at Las Trancas.

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The village men came timidly at first to greet the boys and work with them in smiling silence. All marveled at the gasoline lamps that lit up the schoolhouse at night "better than a hundred *fiesta* candles." The radio that the boys had rigged up held the Otomis fascinated.

Hastings Wilson, a medical student from the University of Pennsylvania, did what he could for the sick and helped many of them. But death came twice during the summer when too long neglected dysentery and lung disease worked their inevitable way. The boys shared the sorrow of the villagers. On the occasion of the second death, Freeman Keith and Bert Sanger served as pallbearers in the sad procession taking the body of a young man down the trail to the Taxhayan cemetery at Las Trancas.

Two days before the camp closing, news came that Ray Newton was on his way up the trail for a visit. When he arrived, Leo dismissed school in order to share in the evaluation session. Glen Fisher spoke of the daily contact with the children in the school as most rewarding. "They represent the future of Mexico. They're still plastic and eager for life. The adults can't be expected to accept change too rapidly, but the children are anxious and ready for it."

Dick Gatineau spoke for many of them when he said he was sure that most of the benefit of the project had come to the workers themselves, that the peace of mind he sought had become very real to him.

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At three o'clock when they parted, Ray Newton said to Leo, "For the rest of my life I shall be telling the story of Taxhay and trying to distill its meaning for myself and others."

Leo reviewed the day with happiness. The masons were completing the store that the boys' labor had made possible. The villagers had responded and taken their part in the communal activity.

The children — indeed, the whole village — had a pre-party air. Plans were all complete for the farewell *fiesta* the following night. The *piñata* was packed and ready in the schoolhouse. The boys were all anxious to see this game, "The Breaking of the *Piñata*." They had watched the preparation of a large clay pot filled with candy and marbles and suspended from the ceiling. Blindfolded, each child in turn, starting with the smallest, would be given a wooden club with which to take one swing at the *piñata*. Sooner or later someone would hit the jug and break it. Then everybody would scramble for the goodies.

There were to be native dances, and the boys who had been knocking themselves out trying to learn them were to amuse the villagers with a demonstration. Bob Pratt described these dances as "surpassing jitterbugging for pure exercise." Bob Pratt, John Sandbach, Freeman Keith, and Dick Gatineau, the musical quartet, were to sing American songs. There would be endless singing and guitar accompaniments from the villagers. Finally,

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since a *fiesta* is an all-night affair, the children were to serenade the boys down the mountain in the morning.

There was not a cloud in anybody's sky. There was no premonition of tragedy.

But about half past four the sky turned as gray as metal. A cloudlike, huge black funnel came down to explode on the mountaintops. Long-prayed-for rain came striking the sun-baked earth like white spears, and the mountain rocked to the roar of thunder. Flashes of lightning tore through the black sky.

Four of the boys were sitting around the table in the schoolhouse, resting after having packed up most of their gear. They were talking about going home, dates, and school.

Lightning struck the radio aerial and knocked the four boys off their chairs. They all got up again but Dick Gatineau.

Hastings Wilson administered adrenalin immediately but to no avail. For nearly five hours the combined scientific knowledge of all thirteen of them — and it was considerable — went into various methods of artificial respiration, but without success. Dick Gatineau was dead.

Freeman Keith suffered complete but temporary amnesia from the shock. Glen Fisher and Wilbur Hoff went down the mountain trail through the pitch dark and in the wild rain to send the unhappy news by phone from Las Trancas to Mexico City.

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Accustomed as the villagers were to death, their habitual reserve and silence broke before the tragic word. The whole village mourned. Singly and in groups they came all through the night to pay their last respects. Above the sound of the wind and rain they chanted century-old Indian laments. In the dawn of the next day forty village men, in relays, carried Dick's body down the mountain.

The boys broke camp that morning, and as Leo worked with them he told them, "Last night the elders of the village gathered at my house. They said, 'The farewell *fiesta* cannot be, yet we would like to commemorate the departure in some way. To honor the *Norteamericanos* and to honor the spirit of Richard Gatineau, we wish you to give the *Amigos de la Paz* these hats which our women have made. We know the *Amigos* would not accept them for themselves; they are well aware we are too poor for gifts. But they have shown us that no man has so little that he cannot share. They have told us that need is of the world, not of Taxhay alone. We wish the *Amigos* to take the hats to the United States to be sold there and the money used to buy food to send to the people across the oceans.'"

"I like to think," Leo concluded, "that Dick found the peace of mind he sought at Taxhay. His spirit will go on accomplishing greater things among men through all of us. None of us — we who remain and you who go back to the world outside — will ever forget him."

chapter eleven

The Climate of Our Age

*T*HE CARILLON PEALD SOFTLY telling the half hour, but it brought only panic to Helen. In fifteen minutes she would have to stand up and take her place before these forty young people. Her carefully prepared speech had blown away like corn husks. A thousand new thoughts had come and gone as she had listened to the girl from the Ozarks, the boy from Mexico, the team from Texas. They had done well. They had known a profound and moving experience.

From her the group would expect the climax in experiences, for she had been chosen to highlight this meeting of representative work campers gathered together on the university campus to share with one another the experiences of their varied summers. They would expect a great deal from her for she had gone to Europe and taken part in work camps in France, Italy, and Germany — a summer they all must envy.

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During the slow voyage home on the crowded student ship she had prepared her speech. She had planned to be bright and interesting, to tell the inevitable anecdotes of the language difficulties in living with students from Norway, the Belgian Congo, Algiers, China, Scotland, Germany. She had planned to tell how they had built a *terrain de sport* at the Collège Cevenol in Chambon, the only athletic field in all of France where military drill would not be mandatory. She had resolved to be gay about the discomforts of tent dormitories and sleeping bags and the monotony of potato soup in France and the eternal *pasta* of Italy. She had decided to bury the doubts of futility that had haunted her in Germany.

But she hadn't counted on what the transition from Europe to America would do to her. From the tiny bare meeting room at Cevenol to this softly carpeted lounge was a longer distance than three thousand miles. Nor had she realized how the full impact of the hungry, the spiritually tortured young people of Europe would hit her at the sight of such a group as this — well fed, comfortable, and confident. And if she felt this way about these young work campers who were aware of problems in their communities and their own country, how would she feel about her own typical and terribly unaware campus crowd?

"I've changed," she thought. "I've forgotten the postcard ideas I had about Europe when I left last June.

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I've got one-world eyes now and I've lived in the climate of fear — the real climate of our age. I have no success story, and to have no success story is not the American way." It came to her then that she probably would never be American that way again. She was as Dutch as Grietje who often sobbed in her sleep living in a nightmare again the days and nights of the fall of Rotterdam. She was German like Ludwig with his war-scarred face who answered the question, "How could you as a Christian condone the treatment of the Jews?" by asking, "How can you as a Christian condone the treatment of Negroes in democratic America?"

Grietje and Ludwig . . . Would they ever be Dutch and German again? Grietje had spaded the soil of the *terrain de sport* beside Ludwig in silent hate. "Do not ask me again, Helen, for I will not speak to him. I can never forgive the Germans." And Helen had dug beside them day after day thinking, "This is the vicious circle that has no end. There is no hope."

One night a young American church leader had spoken on the meaning of work camps. He had said that only to the extent to which young people identify themselves with the young people of other classes, other creeds, and other nations would the work camp program have any meaning beyond its physical contributions. "We have here in common tonight," he had said in conclusion, "only one thing — we are Christians. What we cannot give and forgive each other

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as Americans, Germans, Dutch, or Polish, we must give and forgive each other as Christians."

The next morning Grietje had looked at Ludwig and tried to speak but no words came. A lump was in Ludwig's throat, too. Tears swelled in Grietje's eyes. Finally, after several moments, she was able to say, "Some days it is good again to be alive." "No," Helen thought, "we shall never be Dutch, German, nor American again."

"How can I make them see that the work camp is only a little beginning in their own lives? I don't for a minute believe that the interracial work camp in Chicago is going to solve all our race problems, and they don't either. But I must make them see that if they go back to high schools, campuses, and offices where discrimination is practised openly or overtly and do nothing, the work camp becomes no more than an exhilarating personal experience — another one of American Christians' frozen assets buried in the deep-freeze of good intentions.

"The boy from Texas who prayed this morning — it was a neon-lit prayer, right out of the top of his head. I never heard any prayers like that at Hilfswerke or Agape or Chambon. They were candlelit, awkward, and voiced out of need and belief — and all of us felt them. If I should repeat the prayer that Grietje had said one night at Chambon, 'Guide us, gentle Saviour, help us for we are alone,' this crowd would be shocked.

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They have never been hungry enough, tired enough, or desperate enough to be that simple."

The carillon pealed the three-quarters. Very soon now her name would be called. Helen's mouth was dry and she felt feverish. Her time on the program came. She got up somehow and found she could not walk to the speaker's stand. She stood where she was, clinging to the wing of the chair, and forty young faces turned to look at her in uneasy curiosity.

"I have never felt so alone as I feel right now. I don't know what to say to break the barrier that lies between us. I cannot tell the story of my work camp experience as you have all told yours. I can't say we built an athletic field at Cevenol and take pride in saying it. We did so little in the face of so much to be done. I can't say that the hundreds of students from many lands in the work camps in Italy, France, Germany, and Holland are sure that we took even one small step toward averting war.

"The fact that I can say none of these things does not mean our European work camps were meaningless or that they filled us with frustration. What I am trying to say is that they showed us how much is needed, how very much more. Just as one of the leaders of my denomination said to us at Chambon in a poor little room, which in such a building as this might well be the janitor's closet, 'All we have in common is that we are Christians.' I want to say to you that what we have

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in common here is not only that we are young, not only that we are Americans, not only that we have all been work campers, but, more important, that we have been Christians united in action. If we can say that, then the work camps in which each of us took part really make sense.

“Here in America the climate of fear can be ignored. We have no bomb craters in our cities. We have bread. Our backs are not threadbare. Our spirits are not numbed. But we are warming ourselves at fires of prosperity that will not last the night, for the climate of our age is cold in the rest of the world, and it is inescapable. In the face of crisis the work camp is only a step in the direction of our dreams, a step that must be taken over and over again to carry us and others forward.

“Chambon is a French countryside town filled with little stone houses and red tiled roofs and flower boxes in every window. That is one picture. Bread is rationed, children are without shoes, and the shadow of war is stronger than the light of the summer sun. That is another picture. In Chambon there is a school, which by American standards would be the equivalent of a high school, called the Collège Cevenol. This school is unique in France because it is neither Roman Catholic nor state-controlled. It is also unique because it is coeducational, international, and pacifistic, and is situated in a rural rather than in an urban area.

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“Students from all over the world have participated in this program, helping the students and faculty of Cevenol put up pre-fab houses and classrooms, painting and repairing their buildings, eating the same food as French people, sleeping in tents, discussing in many languages the problems of all of us as human beings and as Christians in a time of crisis.

“After four weeks in Chambon several of us went on to other camps also sponsored by the World Council of Churches. One of these was in the town of Agape in Italy where we shared in the work of the Waldensians, Italian Protestants who for centuries have endured the suffering known to minority groups the world over. Here another group of students from many lands are building an international center for the scattered young people of Protestant faith in Italy. At Chambon we worked five hours a day, which was a physical strain in view of our rations. At Agape students were working ten hours a day on rations even more stringent. Their hands were blistered and their backs ached. They put rock on rock willingly and bravely but with the full knowledge that in the wink of an eye war might be declared and the whole thing ruined.

“You would think that by the time Miriam Bauer — another young Presbyterian work camper from the University of Illinois who had been with me at Chambon and Agape — and I got to Hilfswerke we would have been used to rock-bottom living. But Germany shocked

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us to the core. Whole families are still living in the ruins of bombed-out apartments and buildings.

“Miriam and I had seen something of the ruins of France and Italy, but even those did not prepare us for the devastation we saw in Germany. We saw the faces of the people; to see them is to see despair made real. We saw some of the 30,000 children in the American zone in Germany who have neither home nor family. We saw life reduced by war. We saw situations in Europe that made work camps seem ethereal and futile. But they were one of the few hopeful things we found. The same spark that you have all caught from your work camp experiences we shared in Europe, but we saw that spark struggling against a harsher wind.

“What did the people think of us? Nearly every one of your reports has shown some need of explaining to the people why you were there. In Europe they didn’t ask us why we had come. When one’s house burns down or there is a death in the family, the stricken person does not ask a concerned neighbor, ‘Why have you come?’ The need of the people of Europe is like that of the stricken — they do not ask why you have come.

“It is Americans who ask, ‘Why?’ of such leaders as Joe Howell, the young Congregational Christian minister who has been the director of the Chambon Work Camp for the past two summers. It costs money to send American students overseas for a summer,

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money that each of us pays himself or receives from friends. Some Americans want to know, 'Why not send this money and let the European workers build the roads and schools?'

"To this Joe Howell says, 'In this combination of work and worship at Chambon, something happens to people that is unmistakable and unforgettable. . . . Here is a creative precedent to recommend for reconstruction projects because the material excuse for being in a country — the gift of materials — is transformed into a togetherness of different national groups that has something of the will of God about it. Whoever says, "Why not send the money and let workmen do it?" ignores the difference that taking part in a work camp makes in the lives of young people who volunteer for such service.'

"And he is right. Miriam and I might have contributed the \$600 or so it cost to spend that summer in Europe, but if we had, we would not have known so much about our world or about ourselves as we know now.

"There is a story out of CIMADE that I should like to tell you. CIMADE, as you know, is the Protestant organization that has done so much for refugees in France. Not long ago in Caen, the French city that endured a month's bombardment and 75 per cent destruction, an American student was helping to clear away the rubble of what had once been a Protestant

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church. He picked up a large stone that looked like all the other whole blocks he had salvaged and stacked in neat piles. But it was different. It had a message etched upon its face — '*Aimez-vous les uns les autres.*'

"The student looked around frantically, his bitterness deep within him. 'Love one another' and hell had howled down this street! The year was 1946, and the daily contact with human suffering in the Foyer Cimade and the desolation of the streets were torture to a sensitive and somewhat sheltered spirit such as his. Hysteria mounted in him and he shouted in derision and irony, 'Love one another! Love one another!'

"One of the workmen, shabby and trembling, touched the student's arm. 'A terrible irony — or a profound truth? To see it as irony is to look backward, my young friend. Look backward, if you will, and shatter yourself in despair. Look forward and the truth will make you whole.

"'*Aimez-vous les uns les autres* — had all men followed this, His way, there would have been no Calvary for Him, no fallen temples on this street, no perishing of the innocent in this land. No, my young friend, the truth is not betrayed, nor even fallen here — only the men who mocked it.'

"This was a man, the student knew, who had lost everything — his family, his home, his business, and his health. He did not always know where he was or even his own name, but when the bad spells passed

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he talked like a man of education, as freely in English as in French, a man who undoubtedly had once had means and leisure for philosophy.

"All over Europe this summer there were American college students, work campers like myself, who learned in the midst of desolation the meaning of *Aimez-vous les uns les autres*. The work camp has made it possible for us to follow a pattern of cooperative Christian action in a given situation. But if our Christian action must always be blueprinted for us, then the work camp has said nothing final nor lasting. There are situations all around us that nobody has blueprinted for action. There were no blueprints for St. Francis when he walked along the roads of Italy, preaching to the birds of the forests when no one else would listen. There were no blueprints for Martin Luther nor any of the other great leaders of our faith, but they found ways to work toward their goals.

"Each of us in this room has moved in the direction of his dream of a better world, but let's not kid ourselves one minute. The dream will disappear unless we go on and on in the direction it points, not only for a few weeks of volunteer service but in every one of the common hours of our lives."

Helen sat down. She had fulfilled her assignment, but she knew and every other young person in that room knew that what had meant the most to them could never be put into spoken words. But it could be lived.

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